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**THE CHURCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA:
TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the conception and execution of this research is my own and original work. Wherever I have used the ideas, views and extracts of others I have given due acknowledgement.

Signed by candidate

JERRY PILLAY

Acknowledgement of Scholarship

I hereby wish to acknowledge with sincere thanks and appreciation the generous scholarship awarded to me for this research by the National Research Foundation. However, the views and ideas expressed in this study are those of the author and does not necessarily reflect that of the National Research Foundation.

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SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear and concise overview of the project's objectives, scope, and deliverables. It serves as a reference point for all stakeholders involved in the project, ensuring that everyone is aligned and working towards the same goals.

The project aims to develop a comprehensive system that will streamline the workflow and improve the efficiency of the organization. The system will be designed to handle all aspects of the business process, from data collection to reporting and analysis.

The project will be implemented in a phased manner, starting with the core functionality and then adding additional features as needed. The final deliverable will be a fully functional system that meets the requirements of the organization and provides a significant improvement in productivity.

The project team is committed to delivering a high-quality solution that meets the needs of the organization and provides a significant return on investment. We will work closely with all stakeholders throughout the project to ensure that the system is tailored to their specific requirements.

The project will be managed using a structured approach that includes regular communication, progress tracking, and risk management. This will ensure that the project stays on schedule and that any potential issues are identified and resolved early on.

The project team is confident that the system will be a success and will provide a significant benefit to the organization. We will continue to monitor the system's performance and make any necessary adjustments to ensure that it remains effective and efficient.

The project team is committed to providing excellent customer service and support throughout the project. We will ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed of the project's progress and that any questions or concerns are addressed promptly.

The project team is confident that the system will be a success and will provide a significant benefit to the organization. We will continue to monitor the system's performance and make any necessary adjustments to ensure that it remains effective and efficient.

ABSTRACT

The Churches in South Africa played a vital role in the dismantling of apartheid. However, since the establishment of the new democratic government the Church seems to have retreated into denominational and ecclesiological interests. The Church claims that it was forced into the liberation struggle because all our (political) leaders were either in exile or imprisoned. And now that our leaders have been elected into political office it is their responsibility to build a new South Africa. This research takes issue with the latter view. It is our claim that the Church has an even greater role to play now in the *development* of the new South Africa. The task of the Church is not only to break down unjust structures but to also build new ones. The task of the Church is to point to the "Kingdom of God."

Development has captured the central stage of history and it is also a key word in the new South Africa. This ambiguous process is often depicted as the crucible through which all societies must pass and, if successful, emerge purified: modern, affluent, and efficient.

Is this what development is all about? Is this the Christian understanding of development? By defining the Christian understanding of development as *humanisation* this research offers its central thesis: *The Christian Church has always had a notion of development and under girding this is a theology (of development) that the Church has not fully understood or adequately embraced.* Hence it is no longer a question of whether the Church must be involved in development instead it is the question of: What kind of development must the Church engage?

This research prepared the way for a "theology of development" by: (1) offering a comprehensive discussion on the concept and theories of development (Chapter Two), (2) showing development as an integral part of the mission of the church in history (Chapter Three) and, (3) examining Biblical material on the poor and pointing to a preferential option for the poor (Chapter Four).

Then in Chapter Five, in using a qualitative research design that is explorative, descriptive and contextual, we looked at two local churches and their attempts to transform (develop) their communities. In doing the latter we were able to identify, from within these communities, theological themes that contribute to a Theology of Development. These theological themes were then further explored and discussed in Chapter Six as we attempted to formulate a theology of development.

Having proved our central thesis in this research, that the Christian Church has always had a notion of development and having established a *theological mandate* for development, what remained is to see how the Church is challenged in the area of development. Thus in the concluding Chapter we more specifically looked at the Church in the new South Africa and her role in the development of the country.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BNA	-	Basic Needs Approach
EFSA	-	Ecumenical Foundation in South Africa
GEAR	-	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GNP	-	Gross National Profit
IMC	-	International Missionary Council
IRM	-	International Review of Missions
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIEO	-	New International Economic Order
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches
SR	-	Self-Reliance
UN	-	United Nations
WARC	-	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	-	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE : THE POOR ARE PEOPLE TOO

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Why this study on Church and Development in the New South Africa

My interest in the area of church and development first started in 1990 at the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. That was when I realised that the new emerging political dispensation was to offer a challenge to the Church in South Africa concerning its future role and function. Prior to 1990 the church in South Africa was forced into a prophetic role as it fought against the evils of the apartheid system. Its immediate role was to enter into the struggle for the political, social and economic liberation of the masses in our country.

In 1994 my interest in development was further strengthened with the establishment of the first democratic government in South Africa. It was at this point that questions concerning the role of the Church in the new South Africa became most apparent. A number of churches that were involved in the struggle for liberation suddenly retreated to what they now considered to be the 'true business' of the Church. They see in this a more narrow focus on developing spirituality and ecclesiology. Unfortunately with this came a sense of isolation from societal issues. The latter fact can be seen in the generally accepted view that the church has done its share in the dismantling of apartheid, now it is up to the politicians and economists to build a new South Africa.¹

It is the latter point that this study takes serious issue with. As with many others, it is my view that the Church has an even greater role to play now in the development of the new South Africa. It cannot simply sit back and say that its work is done. It must go the extra length to help create a new society. Why should the Church in South Africa do this?

¹ The President of the SACC in their conference also expressed this view in 1995.

Firstly, its role in the demise of apartheid proved highly successful. It is true to say that it was the involvement of the churches² that helped contribute to the dismantling of apartheid. Its call for international sanctions and disinvestment helped to isolate South Africa and at the same time raised international awareness of the country's political situation. Hence the Church has a powerful national and international voice that it must continue to use to build a new South African society.

Secondly, the Church is probably one of the most trusted and accepted institutions in South Africa. According to a recent survey conducted by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Christian Church is the most credible body in the country.³ Such credibility and trust no doubt stands the Church in good stead to take the lead in developing the new South Africa.

Thirdly, the Christian Church is said to occupy the largest area of the religious landscape in South Africa. This, of course, gives the Church wide accessibility to the majority of people in South Africa. It also places the Church in a position of great responsibility to drive its members to participate in the development of the new South Africa. It must be accepted that any attempts to build a new South Africa must involve all people in our land; it cannot be just the responsibility of the new government. The Church can play a vital role in educating the majority of people in South Africa about such a responsibility.

Fourthly, the Church not only has great accessibility to the majority of people at the grassroots level, but it has the necessary infrastructure and motivation to successfully organise sustainable development projects among the poor. This is something it has always been doing.

² The churches that I refer to here are those that were involved in the Ecumenical Movement at that time, especially with the SACC.

³ Brigalia N. Bam, Charles Villa-Viciencio and Logan Naidoo shared this at a Conference on Racism in October 2000, Kempton Park.

The central thesis in this research is that the *Church has always had a notion of development and undergirding this is a theology (of development) that the Church has not fully understood or adequately embraced*. The question is not whether the Church in South Africa must be involved in development or not, instead the key questions are: How must the Church be involved in development and what kind of development should it promote?

In Chapter Two we shall attempt to trace the secular origins of the concept of development and then examine the Church's contribution to this debate. We shall conclude this chapter by offering the definition used in this research.

In Chapter Three we shall discuss the central claim in this study: that the Church has always had a notion of development in its practice and theology. In order to achieve this we shall firstly attempt to define the Christian Mission in its holistic sense and, secondly, we shall endeavour to show that the Church from its inception always understood development to be part of its mission. Local churches and missionaries have understood implicitly that the *humanisation and development of life* is part of their religious task and, as such, is called for by the very gospel they witness to. This was perceived in its intent to transform society and so to bring in the "Kingdom of God".

The Church also accepts its responsibility in development as it takes seriously its biblical concern for the poor. The poor are the ones who suffer injustice through exploitation and oppression and bondage. Life is literally taken from them as they experience the concrete impact of sin. The poor are without recourse, and their resources are minimal or nonexistent. This world judges them to be beggars, destitute, burdens to the state. But the poor and weak of both the Old and New Testaments are the preferred of God and His justice; they receive the attention and compassion of Jesus. The poor are the persons open and receptive to God's gifts, dependent as they are on Him as the source of life. Hence any legitimate concern for the poor must inevitably pave the way for a development ministry with the poor. This is another reason why the Church in South Africa must be involved in development - the majority of its people are poor. Chapter Four examines the Biblical imperative to make the poor the focus of mission and development.

Having established the fact that development has always been the ministry responsibility of the Church, Chapter Five attempts to evaluate how this has influenced the practical ministry of two local churches. The aim here is also to ascertain the common elements that are dominant in churches that take community development seriously. It is hoped that such revelations will stir other local churches into doing the same.

In the final analysis the Church is called to be involved in development because it has a theological mandate to do so. Hence the Church in South Africa needs to understand, embrace and accept its theological foundations for development work. Chapter Six attempts some theological reflections on development as it draws on some important themes that constitute a Theology of Development.

In Chapter Seven we shall attempt to examine the role of the Church in the development of the new South Africa. It is here that we will endeavour to suggest how the Church in South Africa can be involved in development.

1.1.2 Value of the research

The issue of development is receiving worldwide attention and it is also creating an impact on the role of the Church. More particularly for us in South Africa it is of serious concern since our young democracy is attempting to build a new South Africa. The value of this research is five-fold:

- a) It is a South African contribution to the international debate about the Church and its role in development.
 - b) It will undertake serious reflection on a biblical perspective of development and so provide some answers to the questions that the churches in South Africa are asking with regards to development.
 - c) It will offer theological guidelines to the church's participation in promoting development, which can be used universally.
 - d) It will acknowledge the Church as one of the major contributors to the dismantling of apartheid and affirm its need to be instrumental in the building of a new country.
- Perhaps this will serve as reminder to the other churches in the world where there are

struggles against oppression and poverty that the Church does have the power to transform society - the power of a just God.

- e) It will also justify the need for continued ecumenical work, which, at least in South Africa, seems to be slowly dwindling since the dismantling of apartheid and the birth of a new democratic nation.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1 Review of Literature and Opinions

According to LeCompte and Preissle a researcher normally uses a literature review to find studies that confirm the legitimacy of his study and provide support for the research questions and design he uses.⁴ The researcher also tries to find support for the validity of his conclusions. LeCompte and Preissle argue that "this approach is inadequate because it does not permit researchers to do justice to work which has preceded their own, show how the new study integrates with old ones, or indicate directions to which their work might point".⁵ They also argue that literature review is critical to a study because it allows researchers to explain to the reader the theoretical basis of the study. The researcher's biases are revealed from the way he selects his population and through the way he collects data, analyses it and eventually interprets it. During the course of the study the literature review becomes the reference point for retaining or changing the focus of the research.

The decision on where to place the literature review in a study is not always easily arrived at.⁶ Some researchers place it at the beginning of a study whilst others prefer it in the middle or at the end of the study. In the present study the literature review will be conducted at the beginning. The central thesis of this dissertation is that the Church has always been involved in the transformation of society and in this sense it has always been involved in the development of communities. Our aim here is to show that the concept of development is not

⁴ M.D. LECOMPTE, J. PREISSLE, *Ethnography and qualitative designs in Educational Research*, San Diego: Academic Press, 1993, p.150.

⁵ Ibid., p. 150.

⁶ M. D. LECOMPTE, J. PREISSLE, O. MILLROY, *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*, San Diego: Academic Press, 1992, p.61.

new to the Christian Church. In order to prove this point we shall attempt a brief historical survey on the mission of the Church from its inception. Hence a literature review becomes necessary. Having established the fact that the Church has always been involved in development we shall then proceed to see how this is embodied in the life of the church, especially as it works among the poor (Chapter Five).

The review of literature shall be complemented by the opinions, views, statements and thoughts of public and church personalities who have spent a long time in development work themselves. The researcher is privileged to have conducted interviews with over fifty such people. Included among these are the executive members of the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the South African Council of Churches, the Western Cape Council of Churches, World Vision, Youth for Christ and many others (see Appendix 1 for a list of people interviewed).

1.2.2 Contextual Research

Contextual research focuses on subjects within a specific context in order to gain an understanding of the subjects within that context.⁷ The present study is contextual in nature because it deals with the experiences of the churches in two⁸ specific local settings. The focus then is on a specific socio-economic, political, educational and religious context.⁹

This study conducts socio-economic contextual analysis with special reference on a socio-religious perspective on two specific communities: The Isipingo Farm community, Durban, and the Olifantsvlei Farm community, south of Johannesburg. The study attempts to see how two local churches, one in each community, have been “doing” development within a context of poverty and how this can contribute to a theology of development. What are the reasons for choosing these two communities? The following reasons have determined this choice:

⁷ Contextual research is also referred to as participant observation research.

⁸ The researcher has examined five (5) local churches in this study. However, three of them are included as appendices. The five are: The Lotus Park Presbyterian Church in Isipingo, The Moses Maren Mission south of Johannesburg, St Anthony’s Church in Boksburg, The Salvation Army in Benoni and the Northfield Methodist Church in Benoni. It can also be pointed out that these churches are representative of the four different race groupings in South Africa: Indian, Black, Coloured and White.

⁹ J. MOUTON & H.C. MARAIS, *Basic Concepts in the Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 1991.

First of all, each local church belongs to a representative theological stream within the major churches in South Africa. In particular, the researcher has been instrumental in the founding of the Presbyterian congregation in Isipingo Farm where he served as a Pastor for several years. In this context the researcher has been able to participate as a full participant.¹⁰ Belonging to the same ethnic group (Indian) as the people in Isipingo Farm, and faced with the same oppression of the apartheid regime, the researcher was able to have a first-hand experience of life as experienced by the people within this community. However, the researcher cannot claim the same experience of poverty as encountered by the people in this community.

Secondly, each of these two churches is founded within poor communities and are themselves poor. Hence it is an indication of how the poor are attempting to develop themselves. It is not a case of the rich empowering the poor. Rather it is a visible demonstration of how the poor are attempting to empower themselves.

Thirdly, each of these churches has a direct interest, focus and knowledge of development. They have active programmes aimed at developing both people and the community. They are using “philosophies of ministry” or mission statements in written or unwritten form; it can thus be asked in the research process if these function as road maps, for path finding purposes, for vision casting or for developing a model as to how local churches can be involved in developmental work.

Fourthly, the researcher has engaged in active observation of the Moses Maren community and their community development programmes and has enjoyed friendly relationships with leaders in this church over the years. It is hoped that this research will be able to benefit these leaders and churches in some way. Kritzingar observes the need for this in the following comment:

Far too little of our sophisticated academic research ever reaches the religious communities we study, which means that we actually do research on people, or behind

¹⁰ There are at least four master roles that can be played by participant observers, namely full participant, participant – as observer, observer-as-participant and full observer.

their backs, without helping them to understand themselves better and without learning from them which important issues need to be researched.¹¹

This method of “contextuality” also describes how we intend to “do” theology from below, i.e. from the context of poverty and oppression. The researcher will attempt to show what the poor in specific communities have to say about development and how their views contribute towards a theology of development. In this regard the theology we attempt is contextual. It is worth clarifying here the researcher’s understanding of ‘contextual theology’, a term often used to cover a wide range of meanings. It is a term that is also questioned. For example, Mosala offers three grounds upon which it is to be questioned.

Firstly, the notion implies a ‘theological harmlessness’. ... The implication is that there can be a non-political theology, which must be made ‘political’ by applying it to a certain context. This is false. ... The second reason ... has to do with the social class origins of the term itself. ... In South Africa this concept appeals more to white and privileged theologians than to black and oppressed theologians. ... Thirdly, contextual theology as an attempt to do theology differently is simply tautological and theoretically bankrupt. This is because all theology is contextual theology. The real question is ... what is the socio-political context out of which a particular theology emerges and which it serves.¹²

James Cochrane points out that context is normative for theology.¹³ He however poses the questions, “Can context be considered a reliable norm for theology? What is meant by *context*?” In response to the last question, he asserts that context cannot be seen simply as synonymous with *Sitz im Leben*. This implies that the meaning of the term goes beyond a descriptive or comparative approach. To analyse a situation requires that one ask questions, among other things, about the material and social conditions that define and ideologically shape knowledge (theology). He states that the answers to such questions contextualise the

¹¹ Quoted in J.SCHMIDT, *Interdependence, Responsibility and Partnership: A German Perspective on the Northern Local Church in her International Context*, Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997, p.16.

¹² I. MOSALA in, GRAHAM PHILPOTT, *Jesus is Tricky and God is Undemocratic: The Kin-dom of God in Amawoti*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993, p.18.

¹³ JAMES R. COCHRANE, *Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999, p.54.

Sitz im Leben.¹⁴ Contextual theology then begins with an emancipatory interest grounded in the real material conditions of oppressed local communities or groups of persons.

But is it valid to do theological reflection in the context of the poor and marginalised?

Answering in the affirmative, Cochrane points out two general claims.¹⁵ The first takes note of three characteristic elements in the Christian tradition: (1) Jesus' highly unusual privileging of such people in his ministry; (2) the early Christian emphasis on the inseparability of body-mind and world-spirit in the divine redemptive activity; and (3) the central significance of the cross, that is, the suffering shared and borne by Jesus for the sake of the world. The second general claim states that redemption is precisely an overcoming of the conditions that enslave, dehumanise, marginalise, and alienate us from our neighbour, our self, and God.

With these questions in mind the researcher will attempt to "do" theology in the context of the poor (with the poor), not by imposing his particular views but by seeking to discover how the Spirit of Jesus is already at work in this context. In the process of doing this the researcher will attempt to look at the issues that contribute to a theology of development as offered by the poor and oppressed. In attempting to dialogue the theological reflection and thinking of the "ordinary" people, the researcher will, thus, not take a systematic approach to theology.¹⁶ However, he will use the theological knowledge and experiences from the usually "unheard" and "neglected" people to challenge and reshape traditional theological formulations which were generated from within the context of the educated, dominant and powerful (Chapter Six).¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁶ Cochrane describes this sense of "doing" theology in greater detail: "It is from this base that the living force of any contextual theology of the *sensus fidei* will have to come. It has been my contention that theology is not absent from this base, insofar as ordinary Christians reflect upon their faith in the light of their daily experiences and struggle for existence. Their reflection may be, and usually is, that of the theologically untrained mind: it may be naive and precritical; it may be unsystematic and scattered; it may draw incongruently on a range of symbols, rituals, narratives, and ideas that express the encounter with the sacred. In these senses, the theology present in communities of ordinary Christians is incipient rather than overly articulated. Nevertheless, it remains theology." (COCHRANE, Ibid., p. 145.)

¹⁷ Cochrane describes this process and methodology in greater detail. He states that this theological framework expresses itself in the link between local theologies and broader theological discourses (national, international, ecumenical) in the form of a fourfold matrix of tasks (local, generic, fundamental, missiological). For more on this see, COCHRANE, Ibid., pp. 147-148.

1.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The research methods used to collect data and the process of analysing the data obtained will now be described in greater detail. Data was collected through the use of the following methods:

1.3.1 Data Collection: Case Studies

Since this thesis relates the concept of development to the local church and has formulated the hope that the end result of this research will be practically applicable for the local church, local churches were researched against the background of the theoretical findings developed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The hypothesis is that the local church is a potential agent for bringing about transformation, change and development within the community where it is located and even beyond.

The aim of this thesis is to see how local churches can be involved in community development. This search for models also seems to be imperative in the light of the theological mandate that is given to the church for development work, an idea which will be expanded further in Chapters Five and Six. This research examines two local churches in their specific socio-economic, political and religious setting (in Isipingo Farm and Olifantsvlei) in order to understand their attempts at transforming the communities in which they are found and to observe the theological themes that they use (both consciously and unconsciously) that may constitute a theology of development.¹⁸ Hence much of the information for this study has been drawn from the people within these two communities, over a period of five years. We obtained this by:

1. Drawing together a team of five people with interest in community matters to help collect information on the community. The interview schedule¹⁹ (see appendix 2) concentrated on issues such as:
 - a) Housing

¹⁸ Reasons for this choice have been given, see pages 7-8.

¹⁹ The Interview Schedule used was taken and adapted for our use from one prepared by sociologist, Lawrence Schlemmer, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Natal.

- b) Wages
 - c) Employment/unemployment
 - d) Religious Groupings
 - e) Economic Standards
 - f) Education
 - g) Political leaders
 - h) Services and Facilities.
2. The conducting of discussions or informal interviews with the “ordinary” people from the various segments of the communities.
 3. Establishing personal contact with as many knowledgeable people as possible, especially with religious, political and community leaders.
 4. An interview was conducted with the Town Clerk of Isipingo where both written and verbal information was collected.

This information was then collated, processed and analysed by the same team of people.

1.3.2 **Data Collection: Interview with Pastors**

Interviews were conducted with five Pastors who are working in different communities and whose churches are involved in community development programmes. Three of these interviews are placed as appendices in this research in order to enrich this study. Whilst these interviews were unstructured, informal and open-ended discussions, the researcher probed for responses to specific questions or comments. Some of these are as follows:

- How would you define the Christian Mission?
- What is your understanding of Development?
- Would you say that your local church is involved in Development? If yes, How?
- What do you understand by a Theology of Development?
- What would you say are some of the main theological issues related to development?
- Why and how should the Church be involved in development in the new South Africa?

The participants were informed about the need to tape record the interview and the researcher assured them of confidentiality and the value of their contributions. During the discussions the researcher made use of a variety of interpersonal and communication skills to facilitate the process of interaction.²⁰ Some of the techniques used: Probing,²¹ Paraphrasing,²² Reflection,²³ Summarisation,²⁴ Minimal verbal responses,²⁵ Clarifying,²⁶ and Questioning.

These interviews with the Pastors which are used in Chapters Five and Six, however, have certain serious limitations: a) they are verbatim, not case studies; b) they are conducted only with Pastors and not with the other sectors of the community; c) there is no thorough setting of the context or critical investigation, or even comment on my part; and d) they do not specifically speak about any theory of development. However, it is my belief that the views expressed by these Pastors can provide valuable insight toward the understanding of a theology of development and are therefore included as Appendices in this study. These interviews are intended to enrich, provide comparison, and help debate points that are raised in this research. I believe that the time has now come for the Christian church to seriously understand, from its theological standpoint, its need to be involved in development.²⁷ This is the attempt of chapters 5 and 6.

1.3.3 Data Analysis

Once the data had been recorded it was interpreted and analysed by the researcher, using the information collected by the research helpers, notes from discussions with various people knowledgeable in development and tape recordings of interviews with pastors. There was also opportunity to feed back with the pastors some of the analysis that had been carried out,

²⁰ J. E. PERKO & H. Z. KREIGH, *Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing: A Commitment to Care and Concern*, 3rd edition, San Mateo, California: Appleton & Lange, 1988.

²¹ G. EGAN, *The Skilled Helper: A Systematic Approach To Effective Helping*, 4th edition, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1990, p.141.

²² A. E. IVEY, *Intentional Interviewing and Counselling*, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1983.

²³ C. R. RODGERS, Reflection of Feelings, *Person-Centered Review* 2, 1986, pp.375-377.

²⁴ A. V. BOY & G. J. PINE, *Client Centered Counselling: A Renewal*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1982.

²⁵ IVEY, Ibid.

²⁶ EGAN, Ibid., p.144.

²⁷ "What is theology of development? Theology of development is reflection on the reasons for Christian involvement in development, the method of involvement, and the goal of involvement from a Christian and biblical perspective." (RONALD SIDER, *Evangelicals and Development: Towards a Theology of Social Change*, Australia: The Paternoster Press, 1981, p.9.)

and this was commented on and changed by the participants. However, the overall analysis of the data was understood to be the role of the researcher.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.4.1 The Church

Where I wish to refer to the Church in its most general sense (meaning no specific denomination) or in the theological sense (the 'Body of Christ'), the word Church is always capitalised. The one exception is when it is attached to the name of a denomination (the Presbyterian Church) in which case the meaning is obvious. Wherever I refer to the Ecumenical Church or churches in South Africa, I am thinking more particularly of the churches that have been affiliated to the South African Council of Churches in the days of apartheid, e.g. The Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, etc.

1.4.2 The Kingdom of God

The term Kingdom of God is a problematic one. It is feudal, both as a reference point and as an image of relationships that are hierarchical and irrevocably "customary". The term is thus anachronistic to notions of democratisation, *even* in considering claims about God (that is, the metaphorical base for our language of God). The term is also patriarchal and can thus be inconsistent with a gendered philosophy of development. However, in this research I shall continue to use the term as an appeal to tradition for the following reasons: 1. It is a term that is biblically based, 2. It is used widely in theological circles; 3. It is a key concept that encourages a Christian involvement in transforming the world; and 4. It is commonly used and accepted by local churches. Since it is my hope that local churches would (mostly) use this research findings, I prefer to retain the language and terms that are commonly accepted. However in order to maintain my sensitivity to issues of democracy and gender, I shall attempt to use the words 'the Reign of God' where possible. Where it is necessary to use the term Kingdom of God, I shall place it in inverted commas to express such sensitivity. In the next chapter we shall conduct a literature review on the secular origins of development and then discuss the churches' contribution to the same.

CHAPTER TWO : THE DEVELOPMENT DEBATE AND THE CHURCH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past five decades the meaning of development has seen significant changes, which is clearly observed in the proliferation of development theories. A common factor of all these theories is that they represent only partial solutions to the problem. A general review of some of the theories regarding development will be attempted later in this chapter. We shall first attempt to trace the meaning of development through the decades.

Prior to the 1950s development referred to improving the material aspects of a country or society. In the 1950s development was largely oriented towards economic growth in terms of Gross National Product (GNP), and this resulted in rapid urbanisation at the expense of agricultural development.

It was towards the end of the 1960s that the general feeling began to spread in the developing countries that their rising expectations were not going to be realised. The richer nations of the North had already become disillusioned with promises of development through the technological revolution. The material gains were offset by losses in those things that made life human. Western models of development had been largely unsuccessful in less developed countries, particularly in rural areas, and created social problems. They resulted in a growing deterioration of the biophysical environment. More recently, development in less advanced countries has been seen as a multi-dimensional process with objectives aimed at eradicating poverty, providing employment opportunities, reducing income inequalities and raising living standards, as well as bringing about human development. People are increasingly seeking participation and involvement in their own development.

2.2 WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

2.2.1 Development as Progress

The idea of progress is the major philosophical legacy left by the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in the contemporary social sciences.¹ The idea was secular, departing from the medieval mind-set where everything could be explained by God's will. It maintained that with a few temporary deviations, all societies are advancing naturally and consistently 'upwards', on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance, to riches, civilisation, democracy and rationality, the highest expression of which is science. It gave the impression of an irreversible movement from an endless diversity of particularities, wasteful of human energies and economic resources, to a world unified and simplified into the most rational arrangement. Theodor Shanin reports that it was therefore seen as a movement from badness to goodness and from mindlessness to knowledge, which gave this message its ethical promise, its optimism and its reformist 'punch'.²

The Western world which first adopted the notion of progress presented their own understanding as the highest achievement of progress to date, and consequently projected the shape of the coming future to the rest of humankind as an example to all, a natural leader of all. This unfortunately lent the idea its immense arrogance.³ Thus the idea of progress eventually became a powerful ideology of disenfranchisement, and often generated remarkable acts of cruelty, accepted as insignificant in the long term and therefore permissible, indeed a duty, to the elite of 'those who know'.⁴

¹ M. RAHNEMA & V. BAWTREE, *The Post-development Reader*, USA: University Press, 1996, pp.65-72.

² Ibid., p. 66.

³ For more on this see R. NISBET, *History of the Idea of Progress*, London: Heinemann, 1980, p.8f.

⁴ RAHNEMA & BAWTREE, Ibid., p.70.

2.2.2 Development as a Process

Development does not take place overnight; it is a process. The concept of development is open to various interpretations. Etymologically it means “unfold, reveal or be revealed, bring or come from latent to active or visible state; make or become known, make or become fuller, more elaborate or systematic, or bigger”.⁵ These meanings imply activity and process, but without any moral or qualitative significance.

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden state that development is a process but they give serious consideration to its moral value.⁶ For them “development is a process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future, in order to realise the full potential of life that God has made possible”. Hence, development is a process towards a goal.

Denis Goulet states that, “as one reflects on its goals, one discovers that development, viewed as a human project, signifies total liberation. Such liberation aims at freeing men (sic) from nature’s servitudes, from economic backwardness and oppressive technological institutions, from unjust class structures and political exploiters, from cultural and psychic alienation, in short, from all of life’s inhuman agencies”.⁷ Such liberation is, however, a process.

2.2.3 Development as Growth

Development is a widely used term. B. Hettne points out, “there can be no fixed and final definition of development, only suggestions of what development should imply in particular contexts”.⁸ On the one hand it may be used in a neutral sense to cover the general social,

⁵ Definition is from the Oxford Dictionary.

⁶ VINAY SAMUEL & CHRISTOPHER SUGDEN, *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Michigan: William B Eerdmans, 1987, p.22.

⁷ DENNIS GOULET, *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development*, Atheneum, 1977, p.4.

⁸ B. HETTNE, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds: Towards an International Political Economy of*

economic and political transformations, which affect countries. On the other hand it is used synonymously, though incorrectly, with the term “growth”.

The development programmes of the 1950s and 1960s started from a primary concern about the condition of people in less developed countries. Hunger, disease, illiteracy and a number of other human ills, led those in more fortunate circumstances to a new concern about providing the basic amenities of life for the suffering multitudes in other parts of the world.⁹ This resulted in an unprecedented emphasis on economic development in these areas and the major effort was directed to this end. This can be clearly seen in the resolution of the General Assembly (1964) of the United Nations 1710 (XVI), which set off the first Development Decade. Its objective was to accelerate progress towards self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations and their social advancement so as to attain in each under-developed country a substantial increase in the rate of growth, with each country setting its own target, taking as the objective a minimum rate of growth of aggregate national income of 5 % at the end of the Decade.¹⁰

Hence, at the macro level, development has been understood in Western economic thought as an increase in the physical quality of output as measured in monetary (GNP) terms. The aim of this approach has been to attain a high degree of industrialisation (with its attendant urbanisation) and a society enjoying mass consumption of material goods. President Harry Truman in his inauguration speech before Congress clearly set out the road to be followed to achieve development in the following words: “Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace”.¹¹

Development, 2nd ed., Longman Scientific & Technical, 1995, p.15.

⁹The initial focus in development was an attempt to deal with world poverty. For a discussion on poverty today, see TIM ALLEN & ALAN THOMAS (eds.): *Poverty and Development in the 1990's*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.6 f.

¹⁰ Quoted in B.N.Y. VAUGHAN, *The Expectation of the Poor: The Church and the Third World*, London: SCM Press Ltd. 1972, pp.14-15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.19.

It was generally believed that the more growth there was, the more development there would be, if not immediately then in the long run.¹² The benefits of growth in a democratic context would automatically reach all levels of society, an idea that came to be known as the 'trickle down' theory of economic growth. Developing societies would move inexorably toward the ever-greater availability of goods and services for all their members. Proponents of the growth-centered vision argued that continued growth was the only hope for the poor.

During the 1950s and 1960s the economic growth theory seemed to have achieved resounding success in raising growth rates of GNP. However, as the 1960s went by the fallacies of these theories began to appear in the economic experience of the developing countries. It became clear that growth of GNP, conventionally measured, was unsatisfactory as the main target of development strategy and as the sole criterion of success or failure. This stems from the failure of this approach in some crucial areas of concern to the population in poorer countries. These include the continuing high rate of unemployment, increased inequality within and among nations, and the stagnation of real income levels among the poorest. The common theme of most criticisms is that the benefits of high growth have failed to 'trickle down' to the poor of the world. In fact, the gap between the poorer and the richer nations became wider. For example, a study undertaken in India compared the situation of the poor in 1960 and 1968 and concluded as follows: "The gains of development have remained largely confined to the upper middle class and the richer sections constituting the top 40% of the population... The per capita consumption of the lower middle and the weaker sections constituting the bottom 40% of the urban population declined by as much as 15% and 20%. In the rural areas ... the consumption of the poorest 5% actually declined by 1%."¹³

¹² For a background to Growth Theory see, P.W. PRESTON, *Development Theory: An Introduction*, London: Blackwell Pub., 1996, pp.154 – 166.

¹³ See C.T. KURIEN, *Poverty, Planning and Social Transformation*, Madras: Indian Council of Social Science Research, 1978.

Another example can be seen in a study in the Philippines where, despite a growth in the country's per capita income, those of skilled and unskilled labour in 1978 were only 76% and 63% respectively of what they were in 1972.¹⁴ Similar conclusions are reported from many other countries in the Third World. In 1993 Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, summed up the state of affairs: 'Despite a decade of unprecedented increase in the gross national product ... the poorest segments of the population have received relatively little benefit. ... The upper 40 per cent of the population typically receive 75 per cent of all income'.¹⁵

Moreover, as B.N.Y. Vaughan points out, "the economic growth itself had been stimulated by artificial external measures through loans and other means that increased the dependence of these countries on donor nations and deprived them of the capacity to direct and determine their own future."¹⁶ He also states that inside the Third World the shape of their development, the incentives required for development in the form of profits and the connection of privileged groups with the sources of technology, created a gap between rich and poor in these countries themselves.

In arguing against economic growth as a sole priority for development, David Korten states that, "this vision equates human progress in the market value of economic output and subordinates both human and environment considerations to that goal."¹⁷ The result, he maintains, has been the extravagant consumption of the world's resources by a favoured few with little recognition of the social and environmental costs borne by the many. As a result, the continued well-being of everyone on planet earth is being seriously endangered.¹⁸

¹⁴ A memorandum circulated to UNCTAD V delegates by four Philippine church groups: the National Council of Churches, Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men and Women, National Secretariat for Social Action and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, quoted in *Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 12, 10 May 1979.

¹⁵ MANFRED A. MAX-NEEF, *From the Outside Looking In*, London: Zed Books, 1986, p.161.

¹⁶ B.N.Y. VAUGHAN, *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁷ DAVID C. KORTEN, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, USA: Kumarian Press, 1990, p.3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

These flaws in the economic development process have been the subject of continuous study not only by the United Nations' agencies but also by the churches. It is clear that the church has been deeply influenced by the reigning (secular) views of development. Christian mission became tied up with Western models of economic and technological growth. This is evident in the fact that mission activity has gone hand in hand with European expansion.

Since the church's expansion went hand in hand with Western economic and political expansion the question with which we must struggle is: To what extent have the values of secular western development permeated Christian development? Western values have certainly influenced the Christian mission. For example, the implicit view of the better future in Western development is "human society progressing toward the attainment of a temporal and materialistic kingdom."¹⁹ The better future for the Christian is to be found in the "kingdom of God." Western views of development are tied not only to singularly secular notions of the better future, but also to secular views of God and the universe that have their origins in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment encouraged a scientific secularisation of the universe insisting that it is a realm that can best be understood through empirical science not divine revelation.²⁰ For many, if God existed at all God existed outside the natural universe, impotent, passive and unable to intervene in the world. This dualistic view of God and his universe has resulted in a desacralisation of his creation, evicting God from his world. Is this, however, the biblical image of God and his relationship to the world? Western development tends to view persons as nothing but the sum of their biological components.²¹ In a universe freed from divine presence and purpose, human beings were increasingly seen as alone. The Christian gospel, however, views persons as those made in the image of God who has special value and dignity and belong to the human community. In the light of the above, development understood purely as economic growth is highly questionable today. Whilst recognising that economic growth is a serious aspect of development

¹⁹ RONALD SIDER, *Evangelicals and Development: Towards a Theology of Social Change, Contemporary Issues in Social Ethics Volume 2*, Australia: The Paternoster Press, 1981, p.74.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

yet it cannot be seen as the equivalent to the total development of society: it is only a part – or one dimension - of general development. Development is taken to mean growth plus change.²²

2.2.4 Development as Transformation

During the 1980s, the dominant reality for the people of the South, after forty years of development commitment, was widespread poverty, a deteriorating environment, and pervasive fear of arbitrary violence. Korten states that it was a decade that experienced the crisis and denial brought about by the emphasis on economic growth as the means for development.²³ However, the final years of the 1980s saw an important awakening, a move beyond denial to a new recognition of need and opportunity and a growing commitment to action that was to change the meaning of development in the 1990s.

The critical development issue for the 1990s was not growth. It was transformation. And the same is true for the opening of the new millennium as well. Korten points out that our collective future depends on achieving a transformation of our institutions, our technology, our values, and our behaviour consistent with our ecological and social realities.²⁴ This transformation must address the following basic needs of our global society.

Firstly, there is a need today for social justice. Current development practice supports an extreme imbalance between over and under consumers of the world's resources, including the natural recycling capacities of the ecosystem. It is extremely unjust that one group should enjoy a sumptuous feast, while the other struggles for existence without the means to produce even a bare subsistence livelihood. Korten points out that justice does not require equality of income,

²² For more info. see, GERALD M. MEIER: *Leading Issues in Economic Development*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 6f.

²³ KORTEN, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

nor does it require that the productive be required to support the slothful.²⁵ It does require, however, that all people have the means and the opportunity to produce a minimum decent livelihood for themselves and their families. Distributive justice is the ethical process of apportioning benefits and burdens to ensure that all parties with stakes in an outcome receive their due or proper share. It is concerned not with “the greatest good of the greatest number” (which seems unjust to any minority), but with a fair apportionment of those benefits and burdens.

Secondly, transformation must address the need for the acceptance and maintenance of human rights. Human rights are moral rights that concern the vital interests of human beings. They permit us to express our human dignity and to help shape the common good. They apply equally and universally to all humans. Moral rights are instruments of justice. They give substance to the formal principles of who should get what and why. They specify the content of what is due. Thus, justice is rendering to each his or her rights, and a just community is one in which everyone’s rights are properly honoured. Henry Shue states that when individuals or groups cannot respect the rights of others, governments must become the agents of our interests and the prime representatives of our responsibilities as a society.²⁶ Rights are not only protections from governmental tyrannies; they also are the basis for our protection by governments from a variety of injustices, including unreasonable concentrations of economic power.

Human beings, as relational creatures, are interdependent parts of communities. Our moral responsibilities arise from being persons-in-communities. The connective tissue of rights and responsibilities is built into our being and is an essential source of our well being. Thus, human rights are expressions of human solidarity - that we stand together with those whose rights are

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Quoted in EDGAR J. ELLISTON, *Christian Relief And Development: Developing Workers For Effective Ministry*, USA: Word Publishing, 1989, p. 68.

denied. Our inalienable human rights were codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, UN General Assembly) and subsequent international covenants.²⁷

Thirdly, over the years we have given little or no consideration to the other kinds of species around us in the world. The result, as we have noted earlier, has been wanton destruction of non-human populations and a dramatic rise in the extinction of species. Yet, concepts of distributive justice can and should be extended beyond human relationships. We need to redefine responsible human relationships to all forms of life with which we live in complex interdependency, and to ground these responsibilities in the demands imposed on us by their vital interests.

Other living things qualify for moral consideration because they are vulnerable and powerless in the face of human hegemony. Whatever their instrumental values for us, they have other and greater value to the Creator. Responsibility inheres us as humans to value other living things as the Creator values us all. The moral issues surrounding this extension of justice are, of course, mind-numbing in their novelty and complexity. This concern for justice to nonhuman life introduces a major moral limit to economic activity. Production and consumption must be limited to the carrying capacity of nature.²⁸ We need moral limits to economic activity to prevent excessive harm to wildlife and wild lands. Profligate production and consumption are abuses of what God has designed for fair and frugal use in a universal covenant of justice.

“Development” in its ordinary usage deals strictly with improvements in and for human communities. But our ecological responsibilities include the protection of ecosystems out of respect for justice to the rest of the biota. Accordingly, there are moral limits to the development of human communities. Any morally acceptable concept of human development must be grounded on distributive justice, providing a fair share of scarce resources to all parties.

²⁷ For a summary of these see the General Assembly Papers of The Presbyterian Church (USA), 1996, p. 78-80. We must, however, here point out that more recently the focus is not on “rights based” models, but on “needs based” models, which we refer to in pages 41 and 42 in this chapter.

²⁸ We refer here to the concept of ‘sustainability’ which is discussed in the fourth point below.

Fourthly, development practice today continues to support economic output that does not take into consideration the unsustainable depletion of the earth's natural resources and the life support capabilities of its eco-system. The ecological crisis has brought into prominence a "new" ethical norm - sustainability or responsibility to future generations. The future is important because history as a whole is important; it is a contribution to the ultimate reign of God. Hence, any attempts at development today must take the need for sustainability seriously.

What is sustainability? It is living within the bounds of the regenerative, assimilative, and carrying capacities of the planet, consistently and indefinitely. It seeks a just distribution of well being between present and future generations by following policies that ensure the ecological conditions necessary for thriving in both the present and future.²⁹ The cultural and ecological heritage that we pass on will shape our successors and their prospects profoundly, for good or ill. The transformed society must use the earth's resources in ways that will assure sustainable benefits for our children.

The concern for sustainability also forces us to think holistically. For the sake of both present and future generations, our assessments of environmental risk must abandon the prevailing methods that concentrate on single events or conditions and adopt methods that account more for cumulative and persistent effects, e.g.; of chemical pollution or extinctions. How should we deal with the prospect of cumulative catastrophes, for example, in which many small hazards combine into a dangerously unacceptable hazard over time? How many "greenhouse effects" and ozone holes are waiting unnoticed in the global future?

Similarly, an abundance of individual economic activities, each ecologically tolerable in isolation, may be ecologically intolerable when considered in the aggregate. Those who claim that continued business expansion is compatible with sustainability generally ignore this

²⁹ See D. PREMAN NILES, *Justice, Peace And The Integrity of Creation: Documents from an Ecumenical Process of Commitment*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994, p.152f.

possibility. Hence it is imperative that strategies for sustainability should reflect the fact that we live in an interdependent and interactive ecosphere in which cumulative economic activities in the present may have severe, even catastrophic, consequences for the future.

In sum, sustainability depends upon careful conservation, comprehensive recycling, maximum efficiency, restrained consumption and product durability and repairability. Sustainability requires us to defend the future through “environmental accounting”- the practice of factoring into our economic equations the long-term costs of such things as resource depletion and pollution.³⁰ Sustainability can neither be achieved nor maintained if we discount those long-term costs in our economic cost-benefits analyses. Where the environment is concerned, discounting the impact of environmental strains on future generations in order to argue for short-term economic gains is nothing short of “stealing from our grandchildren” and flies in the face of the requirements of the norm of sustainability.

Fifthly, development practice has for a long time systematically deprived substantial segments of the population of the opportunity to make recognised contributions to the improved well-being of society. There is a need today for inclusiveness. The exclusion of the contribution by women can be clearly noticeable as one such segment. Flora sums it up well for us:

International development has traditionally occurred in the male world. When groups in industrialised nations... attempt to work toward change in the ‘Third World,’ men have worked with men to solve male-defined problems related to poverty, low productivity, and other symptoms of existence at the periphery of the world economy. Men define the problems, establish the channels, and direct the resources - knowledge, money, and personnel.³¹

³⁰ See T O’RIODAN, *Sustainable Environmental Management: Principles & Practices*, London: Belhaven Press, 1988, pp.40-78.

³¹ E. BOSERUP, *Women’s Role in Economic Development*, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1970.

Ester Boserup in her classic book, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), presented for the first time a new perspective on economic development and its relation to the real world of women. She clearly illustrated that the previous development projects had discriminated against women and children, which in turn essentially brought failure to the whole project. Pat Simmons points out that to suggest that women had been previously excluded from development is a blatant lie: "What is more accurate is that they were invisible to development planners, policy-makers, government officials and foreign 'experts'. Development projects were planned for men, but it was women's unpaid and low-paid labour that provided the base for 'modernisation'."³² Martha Nussbaum asserts that unequal social and political circumstances give women unequal human capabilities:

One might sum all this up by saying that all too often women are not treated as ends in their own right, persons with a dignity that deserves respect from laws and institutions. Instead, they are treated as mere instruments of the ends of others - reproducers, caregivers, sexual outlets, agents of a family's general prosperity. Sometimes this instrumental value is strongly positive; sometimes it may actually be negative. ³³

The role of women in the process of development is now receiving more serious attention among most development thinkers.³⁴ Rapley points out that these thinkers have made important contributions to our understanding of such factors as the different roles played in Third World economies by men and women, or of the nature of Third World households and their position in the economy.³⁵ For example, at the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women, delegates lobbied to have women's unpaid labour factored into national accounts. Raphley establishes that,

³² See *The Post Development Reader*, Claremont, Cape Town: David Philip Pub, 1977, p.248.

³³ MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.2.

³⁴ MARILYN PORTER, Caught in the Web? Feminists doing development, in *Feminists doing Development: a practical critique*, MARILYN PORTER and ELLEN JUDD(eds.), London/New York: Zed Books, 1999.

³⁵ JOHN RAPLEY, *Understanding Development: Theory and Practice in the Third World*, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p.178.

“This alone could greatly alter our conception of development”.³⁶

In South Africa under the apartheid regime the majority black population was excluded from the process of decision-making by the virtue of their non-representation in government and an economic policy that favoured the white minority. As a result, the majority in South Africa remained poor and underdeveloped. The situation is now changing since the establishment of a new democratic South Africa. This illustrates the fact that if development is to work, then all people must exercise their right to be involved in the process of their own development.

Korten points out, however, that inclusiveness does not mean that everyone must enjoy equal status and power.³⁷ It does mean that everyone who chooses to be a productive, contributing community member has a right to the opportunity to do so and to be recognised and respected for these contributions. The transformed society must assure everyone an opportunity to be a recognised and respected contributor to family, community and society.

Sixthly, a number of NGOs throughout the world are giving attention to the definition and projection of a people-centred development that embraces the transformation agenda. This vision looks to justice, sustainability and inclusiveness as the defining principles of authentic development. Another term attributed to this definition of development is “human development” which is now officially used in the annual Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme. The Development Programme describes the term in the following way:

Human development is development of the people for the people by the people.

Development of the people means investing in human capabilities, whether in

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 178-9.

³⁷ KORTEN, Op. cit., p.4.

education or health or skills, so that they can work productively and creatively. Development for the people means ensuring that the economic growth they generate is distributed widely and fairly... Development by the people [means] giving everyone a chance to participate.³⁸

The basic question is: What kind of development is good, desirable, or beneficial? Every conception of development assumes some standard of “the good”. This means that development is fundamentally a moral concept and an ethical problem.³⁹ Human development, in our understanding, is the quest for a good quality of life for all peoples in community.

Any vision of genuine human development must lead us, then, to the identification of criteria for describing and measuring positive human development, namely, the enhancement of the quality of life for all people.⁴⁰ A group of human development theorists and practitioners, at a meeting at the Marga Institute in Sri Lanka in September 1986 outlined some of these criteria. According to Dennis Goulet, they observed that human development is essentially an ethical concern that includes at least five dimensions.⁴¹ They are as follows:

- an economic component dealing with the creation of wealth and improved conditions of material life, equitably distributed;
- a social ingredient measured as well-being in health, education, housing, and employment;
- a political dimension including such values as human rights, political freedom, enfranchisement, and some form of democracy;

³⁸ Quoted in the General Assembly Papers of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 1996.

³⁹ See DENIS GOULET, *The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development*, Atheneum, 1977, pp. 12-21.

⁴⁰ The assumptions that humans are rational and self-interested remain controversial as well. For a critical examination of these issues, see the edition of *Political Psychology* (16,1; March 1995) dedicated to an evaluation of rational-choice theory.

⁴¹ DENIS GOULET, *Ibid.*

- a cultural dimension in recognition of the fact that cultures confer identity and self-worth to people; and
- a fifth dimension called the full-life paradigm, which refers to the meaning systems, symbols, and beliefs concerning the ultimate meaning of life and history.

Goulet adds that, "Clearly, ecological soundness should be added to the Marga list as [a sixth] component of authentic [human] development."⁴²

In this section we have traced the changing definitions of development since the 1960's. We have shown how it particularly moved from a primary understanding of development as economic growth to transformation. However, these meanings were informed by certain approaches to development. We shall now turn to look at these.

2.3 APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

A thorough examination of the theories as to how development may occur is not within the scope of this research.⁴³ However, what follows is a brief survey of some of the theories. The dominant approach to development is the modernisation theory, which has contributed much to a popular understanding of development. Most other theories of development are either variations of modernisation or reactions to it.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ For more information on this see, PAUL STREETEN, *Development Ideas in Historical Perspective*, in *Toward a New Strategy for Development*, A Rothko Chapel Colloquium, New York: Pergmon Press, 1979, pp. 25-35. Also confer GUSTAV RANIS, *Development Theory at Three Quarter Century*, in *Essays on Economic Development and Cultural Change in Honor of Bert F. Hoselitz*, MANNING NASH (ed.), USA: Univ. Of Chicago Press, 1977, pp. 256-66.

⁴⁴ See VINAY SAMUEL AND CHRIS SUGDEN, *The Church in response to Human Need*, Ibid., p.22.

2.3.1 Modernisation

The modernisation theory has its theoretical origins in the work of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.⁴⁵ These theorists propose that there are two basic types of society, the 'traditional' and the 'modern', which have very different forms of social cohesion between their members.⁴⁶ They also have different types of economic systems. The desired factor is that there must be a transition from the limited economic relationships of traditional society to the innovative, complex economic associations of modernity. However, such a transition depends on a prior change in the values, attitudes and norms of people.

Modernisation theorists gained impetus and acceptance after World War II especially as they sought a response to the Cold War and the needs of new nations. They hold that the way to development is to diffuse the industrial system of the West to "less-developed" countries (which is why modernisation is also called diffusionism). Their ultimate goal is to increase production and economic growth which, they say, will raise the standard of living and provide a "good life" for as many as possible.⁴⁷ The development economist, W.W. Rostow, who advocated a more elaborate five 'stage' model for growth, further expanded this theory. In his *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* he claims that,

It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one of five categories; the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, take off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Though Durkheim and Weber produced very different theories about the origins, character and future path of industrial society, it is their general theories of social change that have commanded most attention and which inspired in the twentieth century the emergence of the 'sociology of development'.

⁴⁶ For a more detailed account on the theoretical origins of Modernisation Theory see ANDREW WEBSTER, *Introduction to the Sociology of Development*, Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989. Pp.41-63.

⁴⁷ VINAY SAMUEL and CHRIS SUGDEN, *The Church in Response to Human Need*, p.22.

⁴⁸ WALT W. ROSTOW, *A Non-Communist Manifesto Stages of Economic Growth*, New York: Harper & Row,

This process accelerates, according to the theory, through the transfer of knowledge, technology, and capital from the “advanced” to less-advanced nations. The transfer closes the technological gap between the two and creates an economy in the latter that supposedly matures until it reaches the final stage of high production and mass consumption. At this point, the benefits would trickle down within that economy from the modern industrialised sector to the poorer sectors, creating a society and economy that would look very much like those of Western Europe, the United States, or Japan.⁴⁹

According to Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, the modernisation theory is based on at least five flawed assumptions.⁵⁰

- (i) Modernisation theorists assume that traditional (that is, rural and agrarian) societies are in some absolute sense underdeveloped and that their values and institutions cause underdevelopment as well as express it. It assumes that the Western model of development is the *summum bonum* of human existence and those who declined to accept it were backward and too ignorant to accept it. Such attempts to define what is good merely against the standard of one’s own experience are the height of ethnocentrism.
- (ii) Modernisation theorists assume that their idea of development is an inevitable, unilinear process that operates naturally in every culture. They tend to assume that all traditional societies are alike, and they fail to explain the variations brought about by random change and by interactions between societies. Eisenstadt, one of the more historically sensitive of the modernisation school, recognised the force of this criticism, and in a later contribution wrote:

1960, p.4.

⁴⁹ SAMUEL and SUGDEN, Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

The process of modernisation may take off from tribal groups, from caste societies, from different types of peasant societies, and from societies with different degrees and types of prior orientation. These groups may vary greatly in the extent to which they have the resources, and abilities, necessary for modernisation.⁵¹

The theory that modernisation naturally occurs in a series of stages likewise assumes that “developing” countries today are similar to the “developed” countries at an earlier stage of their growth and that they can therefore modernise in the same way. In actual fact this is far from true. Most of the “developing” countries do not necessarily have the same capital, skills, technology and modern political institutions as the “developed” countries.⁵²

- (iii) Modernisation theory assumes that productivity equals development, and that large-scale capital-, energy-, and import-intensive systems are the most productive and thus the most developed. Benjamin Higgins counters by saying that, “productivity is not development, but merely the possibility of development.”⁵³ There is a qualitative aspect to development that productivity ignores. What may be exported along with the Western ideal of modernisation is universal alienation and industrial bondage. Indeed humanity can be reduced to a unit of production, *homo faber*, with all the anomie and alienation that goes with it.
- (iv) Theorists and politicians commonly assume that the benefits of the system will trickle down to the poorest of the poor. The infusion of capital at the top supposedly creates jobs

⁵¹ Quoted in ANDREW WEBSTER, *Introduction to the Sociology of Development*, MacMillan Education Ltd., 1984, p. 57.

⁵² For a further critique on the modernisation theory see, SARAH WHITE & ROMY TIONGCO, *Doing Theology And Development: Meeting The Challenge of Poverty*, Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 1997, pp.41-48.

⁵³ SAMUEL & SUGDEN, *Ibid.*

so that the “economic pie” grows and benefits everyone with a bigger slice. However, most indications of this assumption have shown that such does not really happen.⁵⁴ Instead what we are left with is a case of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

- (v) Modernisation theory is based on the assumption that nation-to-nation aid fosters development. In actual fact the aim of foreign aid was much more self-seeking. Richard Nixon put it very baldly in 1968 when he said, “Let us remember that the main purpose of American aid is not to help other nations but to help us.”⁵⁵
- (vi) Webster points out that modernisation theory entirely ignores the impact of colonialism and imperialism on Third World countries. This, he asserts, is a staggering omission.⁵⁶ It is also a failure to acknowledge that economic growth is as much if not more about the *power* to control resources as it is about the ‘ambition’ to do so.

2.3.2 Dependency and Underdevelopment

The Dependency Theory originated in the 1960s through the work of a number of academics and development economists who were particularly concerned over the continuing economic failure of Latin American countries.⁵⁷ They dismissed the notions of the modernisation theory that a lack of development could be attributed to a deficiency in appropriate modernising values and that exposure to advanced industrial countries could only be of positive benefit to the Third World. Instead they argued that the massive and persistent poverty in countries like Argentina,

⁵⁴ We have given some indications of this in pages 18-19.

⁵⁵ SAMUEL & SUGDEN, *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ ANDREW WEBSTER, *Ibid.*, p.61.

⁵⁷ For a fuller discussion of dependency theory, see BRUCE RUSSET and HARVEY STARR, *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, 2nd edition, New York: W.H. Freeman, 1985, ch. 16; and E. WAYNE NAFZIGER, *The Economics of Developing Countries*, 2nd edit., Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall, 1990, pp. 11-14.

Peru, Chile and Brazil was caused by exposure to the economic and political influences of the advanced countries. The Dependency Theory arose in reaction to the increasing disparities between rich and poor nations.

One of the major representatives of this position is Andre Gunder Frank, who is most closely associated with the view that the persistent poverty of the Third World is a reflection of its 'dependency'.⁵⁸ Frank argues that the periods of merchant capitalism and colonialism forced a specialisation of production on Third World countries that was primarily export oriented, of limited range and geared to the raw material needs of the imperial powers.⁵⁹ The Third World elites were incorporated into this system and could do little to establish a more diverse, independent form of economic activity. They became the mere intermediaries between the rich purchasers and the poor (peasant) producers. Frank dubs them the *comprador* (literally 'interpreter') elites whose wealth and lifestyles were more and more tied to and so heavily dependent on the activities of the economic elite in the centre, or in what Frank calls the 'metropolitan' country. While the Third World elite enjoy a high standard of living from this relationship, the masses experience chronic deprivation as their surplus production is taken from them in the local rural region and transferred to the rich farmers and merchants in their own country and then on abroad. Frank argues that there is a 'chain of dependency' running down from the highly advanced centres of the world a hierarchy of 'metropolises' with their subordinate 'satellites' through which the economic surplus is passed upwards within a nation

⁵⁸ Within the school of dependency, different meanings are accorded to the concept of "dependence," and different analyses are offered to explain underdevelopment as a result of the interplay between internal and external structures. Variants of dependency theory can be considered in the following works:

PAUL BARAN, *The Political Economy of Growth* (1975); *Dependence and Development in the New World and the Old*, special issue of *Social and Economic Studies* (March 1973); SAMIR AMIN, 'Underdevelopment and Dependency,' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1972); F. H. CARDOSO, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (1979), *New Left Review* (July- August 1972); A. GUNDER FRANK, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1967), *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution?* (1969); C. FURTADO, *Development and Underdevelopment* (1976); I. WALLERSTEIN, 'Dependence in an Interdependent World,' *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1974); ENMER L. BACHA, 'An Interpretation of Unequal Exchange from Prebisch-Singer to Emmanuel,' *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 5 (1978).

⁵⁹ ANDREW WEBSTER, *Op.cit.*, pp.84ff.

and then internationally.⁶⁰

Dependency theory, however, has some major flaws. Firstly, it takes as a given fact that neocolonialism prevents indigenous capitalistic development. Mirroring the modernisation theory which it reacts against, dependency analysis has a strong tendency towards dualism. In modernisation, a sharp contrast is drawn between modernity and tradition; in dependency, it is between core and periphery. But will such a stark opposition really hold water? The evidence suggests things are not so simple. Klaus Nürnberger, however, argues in favour of the centre – periphery idea of development but establishes the need for a new understanding of power relations between the two.⁶¹ The suggested solutions can be summarised as follows:

- a) In the *periphery* population growth must be arrested and the economy must change from stagnation to balanced and sustainable development.
- b) In the *centre* the economic dynamic must be redirected from growth in quantity to growth in quality; from ecological destruction to environmental protection; from marginalisation of the periphery to its empowerment.
- c) *Between centre and periphery* the abuse of power must be curtailed and countervailing processes must be institutionalised to neutralise structural mechanisms which benefit the centre at the expense of the periphery.⁶²

Secondly, colonialism, the centre-piece of dependency analysis, advanced largely through ‘divide and rule’. In military conquest, the invaders turned disputes between local factions to

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999, pp.396f.

⁶² Ibid., p.397. Nürnberger also points out that the respective *collective mindsets* have to change accordingly: in the centre, individualism and avarice must make way for comprehensive horizons and collective responsibility; in the periphery, past-orientation and dependency must make way for self-determination and initiative; in the relation between the two, collective selfishness must make way for mutual loyalty and responsibility for future generations.

their own advantage; the day-to-day running of colonial administrations was carried out largely by native people. Similarly here in South Africa, the apartheid state built up hostility between different black groups, most notoriously through the establishment of 'homelands' which gave their chiefs a stake in the system which made black people subordinate overall.

Thirdly, dependency theory assumes that the centers grow at the expense of the peripheries, but this has not proved altogether true. Fourthly, it assumes that exploitation of the Third World arose with colonialism and is perpetuated by international dominance of the periphery. Capitalism is the sole factor.⁶³ There are social, political and cultural factors as well. It does not take seriously the fact that even within the local state there are split and contradictory groups and interests.

Fifthly, dependency theorists place too much stress on economics. Whilst such a stress is indeed primary for development yet, as we have shown in the previous section, due consideration must be given to social, political and cultural factors as well.

Sixthly, they discuss underdevelopment in the abstract.⁶⁴ Dependency analyses tend to be very large-scale, and rather theoretical. This means that they can gloss over the personal politics of poverty, failing to recognise that change needs to happen at a personal as well as political level. They seem to suggest that what works in one context of poverty will necessarily work in another. It fails to fully consider the fact that poverty can be attributed to a number of causes.⁶⁵

Seventhly, like classic modernisation theory, dependency sees development largely in a male-

⁶³ See IAN ROXBOROUGH, *Theories of Underdevelopment*, USA: The Macmillian Press Ltd., 1979.

⁶⁴ For more information see TONY KILLICK, *A Reaction Too Far: Economic Theory and the Role of the State in Developing Countries*, London: Overseas Development Institute, 1989. Also see JOHN TOYE, *Dilemmas of Development*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

⁶⁵ See FRANCIS WILSON & MAMPHELA, *Uprooting Poverty: The South African challenge*, Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1989, pp.189-249.

biased way.⁶⁶ Attention concentrates on areas of society and economy where men predominate, such as formal sector production, while women's work in domestic or subsistence activities is downplayed or ignored.

And finally, dependency theory, like modernisation, fails to recognise the environmental limits to growth.

2.3.3 Global Reformism: The New International Economic Order

Another reaction to global inequity, sparked partly by the critical analysis of neo-Marxist dependency theorists, is a worldwide political call for a just economic order. In 1974, the United Nations Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly presented a "Declaration of the Establishment of a New International Economic Order" (NIEO) under the leadership of Third World representatives, expressing a cry for economic interdependence based on a more equitable international distribution of wealth.⁶⁷ The NIEO proponents, the famous Group of 77 Nations, stated that this interdependence demanded equitable and fair trade agreements among equal and autonomous nations rather than the continuation of the status quo interdependence in which the poorer countries merely exchanged raw goods for manufactured wares.⁶⁸

The NIEO proposal for global reform was based on some sound principles: autonomous control by developing countries over their own economic resources, international cooperation, active aid assistance by developed countries, a greater participation in decision making, better terms for the

⁶⁶ SARAH WHITE & ROMY TIONGCO, *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

⁶⁷ See ANKIE M.M. HOOGVELT, *The Third World in Global Development*, USA: Macmillian Press Ltd., 1982, pp.80-81.

⁶⁸ This was a relatively tame initiative to establish a more balanced interaction between the rich and the poor nations, but even that proved to be unacceptable to the rich countries. This shows that the latter are still determined by very narrowly defined interests and have not developed global horizons yet. See R. SIDER, *Rich Christians in an age of hunger*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978, p.125ff.

transfer of technology, greater facilities for industrialisation in the Third World, food security, and changes in the international monetary system.⁶⁹

The proposed new economic order, however, retains many of the old assumptions of modernisation with all its flaws.⁷⁰ It does not propose radical change in the economic structures. It advocates, still, a form of 'trickle down' economics but a little faster than before. It assumes that the world's resources are infinite and highly resilient. It presupposes that the 'have-not' countries can maintain cohesiveness in their demands. It assumes that the 'trickle down' approach works. It assumes that the new dependent countries would control their destiny with honour.

2.3.4 "Another Development"

In 1975 a UN study group in Stockholm produced the Dag Hammarskjöld Report, which presented an alternative to the NIEO. This gave rise to the concept of 'Another Development' which was sometimes also referred to as 'alternative Development'. Such a development is more concerned with the unseen victims than with the victors in the development drama. It is the perspective of the excluded. Alternative development is a cry for visibility, participation and justice.⁷¹ The main importance of these normative⁷² approaches is that they focus on the *content* of development rather than the *form*. Economic growth models show the predominance of form over content in the early Eurocentric phase of development theory. The report outlined a new framework in development strategy: "Development is a whole. Its ecological, cultural, social, economic, institutional and political dimensions can only be understood in their systematic interrelationships, and action in its service must be integrated. Similarly, needs cannot be

⁶⁹ SAMUEL & SUGDEN, *Ibid.*, p.113.

⁷⁰ SAMUEL & SUGDEN, *Ibid.*

⁷¹ BJORN HETTNE, *Development theory and the three worlds*, Longman Scientific & Technical, 1995, p.161.

⁷² Normative are contributions which deal with development not in terms of how it actually takes place but rather how it *should* take place.

dissociated from each other: the satisfaction of each need is at one and the same time the condition and the result of the satisfaction of all others.”⁷³ Another Development was defined as:

- Needs-oriented (being geared to meeting human needs, both material and nonmaterial).
- Endogenous (stemming from the heart of each society, which defines in sovereignty its values and the vision of its future).
- Self-reliant (implying that each society relies on its own strength and resources in terms of its members’ energies and its natural and cultural environment).
- Ecologically sound (utilising rationally the resources of the biosphere in full awareness of the potential of local ecosystems as well as the global and local outer limits imposed on present and future generations).
- Structurally transformative (so as to realise the condition of self-management and participation in decision-making by all those affected by it, from the rural or urban community to the world as a whole, without which the goals above could not be achieved). ⁷⁴

The idea of endogenous development was central to the modernisation paradigm as well. However, in the alternative approach there is no universal path to development. Every society must find its own strategy in accordance with its own needs. Thus, one starting point for the rethinking of development was the concept of needs.

2.3.4.1 Eradication of Poverty

Another normative approach to development emphasises that basic survival needs are not met in the greater part of the world, neither in the Third World nor in the pockets of poverty that still

⁷³ What Now? Another Development, the Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, published as a special issue of *Development Dialogue* (Uppsala), no.1/2 (1975). Quoted in SAMUEL and SUGDEN, *Op.cit.*, p. 34.

⁷⁴ NERFIN quoted in BJORN HETTNE, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds*, *Ibid.*, p. 177.

exist in affluent societies. It recommends direct attention to meeting *basic human needs* and the redirection of development priorities from producing more goods to sharing what already exists. Hence, alternative strategies give a higher priority to redistribution than to growth. Proponents of an alternative development question the assertion that 'creative destruction' is inextricably linked to the story of human progress. They demand that the question of what furthers human life be examined on its own merits. If social and economic development means anything at all, it must mean a clear improvement in the conditions of life and livelihood of ordinary people.⁷⁵

One example is the so-called Basic Needs Approach (BNA).⁷⁶ In the early 1970s it was widely agreed among international development bureaucrats that economic growth did not necessarily eliminate poverty. Rather the economic growth that actually took place in most developing countries seemed to go together with increases in relative poverty. In response to this dilemma, the BNA proponents favoured a direct approach, i.e. a straight relationship between development strategy and elimination of poverty rather than waiting for the 'trickling down' effects of growth.

In its simplest form the BNA rejected the earlier growth paradigm, arguing for the incorporation of a sort of 'development guarantee' for the weakest social groups in all development programmes. Thus, the discussion of basic needs went together with attempts to define 'poverty' in relative and absolute terms. The new thing about the basic needs debate in the mid-1970s was thus the distinction between economic growth and needs satisfaction. Manfred Max-Neef makes the important distinction between *needs* and *satisfiers*, a distinction, which also bridges the universal, and the specific in the human needs debate.⁷⁷ For instance housing and food are satisfiers of the need of subsistence; education is a satisfier of the need of understanding. From this point of view fundamental human needs are finite, few and classifiable. They are also the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.178.

⁷⁷ M. MAX-NEEF, A. ELIZALDE & M. HOPENHAYN, Human scale development: an option for the future, in *Development Dialogue*, (No. 1): 7-81.

same in all cultures.⁷⁸ What changes (over time and through cultures) is the form or the means by which these needs are satisfied. Max-Neef mentions the following needs, which according to him form a system: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity and freedom.⁷⁹ The satisfiers are infinite but failure to make the distinction between needs and satisfiers will only lead to a 'cosmic improvement of the economist view of development.'⁸⁰

2.3.4.2 Self-reliance

Another key concept in the normative debate during the 1970's was Self-Reliance (SR). This approach stressed reliance primarily on one's own resources.⁸¹ In this regard, it differed from the concept of NIEO, which provided a vision of international cooperation rather than de-linking.

Self-reliance is not autarchy or isolation, however, as the Dag Hammarskjold Report points out: "Self-reliance applies at different levels: local, national, and international. At the national level, it gives the economic content to political independence. It is not synonymous to autarchy, but with the autonomous capacity to develop and to take decisions, including that of entering into relations, on equal footing, with other countries, which nations are bound to do."⁸² Above all, in

78 Analysing the human need structure Nürnberger makes a distinction between eminent and transcendent needs:

- a: there are *basic needs* of time, space and power without which nothing can exist in this world
- b: Immanent needs belong to the sphere of reality which is at least partially under human control, or accessible to human manipulation. They include ecological, physical, psychological, communal, social, economic and political needs.
- c: Transcendent needs go beyond human accessibility and control. They include an authoritative system of meaning, an authoritative assurance of one's right of existence and an authority to use the powers at ones disposal to achieve one's goals. In all cultures, world views and religious meaning, assurance and authority are ultimately derived from a source beyond one's own resources.

See KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *An Economic Vision for South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: Encounter Publication, 1994, p.7.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ MANFRED MAX-NEEF, Ibid., p.63.

⁸¹ The popularity of this approach in the 1970s was obviously a corollary to the breakthrough of the dependence paradigm, self-reliance being the antithesis to dependence.

⁸² What Now? Ibid., p. 35, quoted in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Op. cit., p35.

the words of the Cocoyoc Declaration, this autonomous capacity “means trust in people and nations, reliance on the capacity of people themselves to invent and generate new resources and techniques, to take a measure of command over the economy, and to generate their own way of life.”⁸³

Self-reliance is an attempt to promote the participation of all members of society, from the lowest levels up. It could also be called “appropriate” development because it uses technologies derived from local conditions to meet local needs. Even though its focus is local and national, self-reliance allows for “selective participation” on an international level.⁸⁴

This theory, however, was surrounded with failure. For example, these theorists assume that in seeking self-reliance it is possible for a country to be politically neutral. These theorists also assume that the necessary conditions for declaring self-reliance are present in the Third World. Self-reliance development theory also presupposes a state of collective consciousness at the grass-roots level. It assumes that workers, labourers, and farmers are informed and that they share with politicians and leaders common ideas on how their nation should approach those goals.

These theorists view people as easily conformable, rational, and nonegoistic - which makes the theory susceptible to the charge of being too utopian and overly optimistic about humanity in the face of the human condition.

2.3.4.3 The fourth generation: a social movement approach

According to Korten fourth generation strategies look beyond the focused initiatives of the third generation strategies to change specific policies and institutional sub-systems.⁸⁵ They are

⁸³ Cocoyoc Declaration, p.174. Ibid.

⁸⁴ BJORN HETTNE, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds*, Ibid., p. 182.

⁸⁵ DAVID C. KORTEN, *Getting to the 21st Century*, USA: Kumarian Press, 1990, p.127.

motivated by the perception that there is “a need to energise decentralised action towards a people-centred development vision on a much broader scale than is possible with the mere interventions of either second or third generation strategies”.⁸⁶ Korten’s broader perception of development is captured in his understanding of a ‘people-centred’ approach to development. He states that a “people-centred development vision”:

...seeks a synthesis of the change objectives of the environmental, human rights, consumer protection, women’s and peace movements. It seeks a new human consciousness in which the more nurturing, enabling and conserving dimensions of female consciousness gain ascendance over the more aggressive, exploitative and competitive dimensions of male consciousness that have so long dominated the social and economic life of human societies.⁸⁷

Such an integrated meaning of a “people-centred vision” allows Korten to ascertain the need for a *social movement approach* to development: “Social movements have a special quality. They are driven not by budgets of organisational structures, but rather *by ideas, by a vision of a better world*.”⁸⁸ They move on social energy more than money. The vision mobilises independent action by countless individuals and organisations across national boundaries, all supporting a shared ideal.”⁸⁹ Despite the success of people’s movements in the last few decades to reshape thought and action on such issues as the environment, human rights, women, peace and population, development has generally not been viewed *as a movement*.⁹⁰ Hence development is to be seen as a matter integrated with other pressing issues, values, and concerns that drive the contemporary social movements. While not losing its specific identity as a movement of development, the considerable overlapping with the other new social movements is to be

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.124.

⁸⁷ Ibid.,p.5

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.7. Italics added.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.124.

⁹⁰ Ibid.,p.127.

recognised. These movements constitute the most important allies of a fourth generation people-centred development movement.⁹¹

Having outlined the essential theories of development we shall now attempt to see what bearing and influence it has had on the church's view of development, if any.

2.4 THE CHURCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The church's view on development, largely through the ecumenical movement, was at first deeply influenced by prevalent (secular) thinking. Economic growth was seen as the engine of development and, indeed, sometimes equated with development and progress. However, by the mid-1970s, the very idea of development was questioned by large sections of the ecumenical movement. Richard Dickinson identifies seven characteristics of the ecumenical debate about development at around 1975.⁹²

First, the traditional understanding of development focused too narrowly on economic development per se and paid little attention to non-economic factors in social transformation, such as cultural and religious divisions.

Second, real social transformation was to be measured by what happens to people, while the traditional notions of development tended to emphasise more abstract economic or political objectives. In fact, the notion of people-centred development was soon to become the distinctive feature of the ecumenical understanding of development.

⁹¹ There is a *common* denominator shared by all the new social movements, including an anticipated people-centred development movement: they all represent value- and idea-centred processes directed towards the well-being of *people* and the environment; they represent processes in which *people* are the actual subjects (owners) of change. See IGNATIUS SWART, *The Churches and the Development Debate: the promise of a fourth generation approach*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, December 2000, p.146.

⁹² See R. DICKINSON, *Development Assessed: Ecumenical Reflections and Actions on Development*, Geneva: WCC, 1995, P.11.

Third, many discussions on development appeared to assume a too facile harmony of interests between the rich and the poor, while the real situation often was a conflict between the “haves” and the “have-nots”

Fourth, the typical measurements for development like the Gross National Product were increasingly attacked as inadequate.

Fifth, there was a growing conviction that, in the name of development, many national and international economic structures were perpetuating or even re-enforcing structures of injustice. Thus many prominent ecumenical ethicists gradually rejected “development” altogether and chose instead to speak of “liberation”.

Sixth, given the enormous strain on the environment, which growth models of development implied, many began to question whether even the ideals of development were suitable, attainable and desirable.

Finally, there was a growing awareness of the deficiencies of the traditional ‘top-down’ approach in development theory; to rely heavily on trickle down effects seems at best inefficient, at worst a hoax upon the poor.⁹³

Perhaps the most significant contribution that the ecumenical movement made to the debate on development was its emphasis on *people* rather than on *production*. It pointed out that any development must involve the participation of the people concerned and a strong view of justice. It maintained that people are not passive spectators and recipients of the transformation of society. People are active participants, who have roles to play and tasks to perform in bringing

⁹³ For more on the approaches and policies of development by the ecumenical movement see Chapter Three.

about the vision and hope of the reign of God.⁹⁴

Further to this, the ecumenical movement argued for God's "preferential option for the poor" and it placed emphasis on the *poor* as the agents of development. It is no longer the case of the rich developing the poor but of the poor developing themselves. Hence, it was learnt that economic growth as the paradigm for development is clearly insufficient. The needs of human beings and their communities, present and future generations, and creation as a whole, must be the starting point for development.⁹⁵

In its contribution to the debate on development, the ecumenical movement also gained a better understanding of the multifaceted meaning of development and the need for a *comprehensive*⁹⁶ approach. Since people are the centre of development, development should be social development. As a result, all community development projects and programmes, education and training should place an emphasis on social justice, people's participation, and the role of people's movements and the need of networking between them. This also provided a growing awareness that development goes beyond charity and the transfer of money from the rich to the poor.

The ecumenical movement also stressed the need for ecological concerns in the development process. It placed a new emphasis on the care of the environment using the biblical focus on creation. Finally, it maintained that like theology, development has to be contextualised; there is no one development model that is applicable and valid in all parts of the world. To sum it up, the

⁹⁴ DAVID G. HALLMAN, *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, p.24.

⁹⁵ R. DICKINSON, *Development Assessed*, Ibid., p.13.

⁹⁶ The deficiencies of the modernisation approach soon came to light, especially in the context of Third World development. This has led to a more consistent view of development as a *comprehensive social process*, that includes the *interdependence of economic, social, political and cultural factors*, both nationally and internationally. To view development as a comprehensive social process necessarily implies a human and therefore an ethical dimension. Thus the former viewpoint is extended to a *humanistic, or people-centred* perspective on development.

no one development model that is applicable and valid in all parts of the world. To sum it up, the ecumenical movement advocated an *integral human development* approach to development.⁹⁷

Having noted the contributions of the ecumenical movement to the development debate, it must be pointed out that not all the theories of development we have looked at do justice to the biblical understanding of development. The modernisation theory, particularly, portrays a rather self-serving, egotistical and exploitative type of relationship. The quest is here for a theory that provides mutual benefit to both those who are developed and those who are being developed.

In the light of all this, how does the Church define development? The relationship between mission and development is by no means theologically evident or agreed upon. There are those who insist that the mission of the Church consists mainly in preaching of the Word and celebration of the sacraments and the nurture of a person's relationship to God in prayer, worship and in personal ethics. They are not convinced that the relationship of human development is integral to the Gospel. On the other hand, there are those who are so caught up in the struggle for freedom, justice and peace and human dignity that they virtually identify mission with development.

The Christian church has played a vital role in the transformation of people and society. Its mission has been to bring in the reign of God and to achieve this it had to work towards the establishment of a society in accordance to God's will as revealed in the Word. In this sense the church has always understood development to be part of its responsibility (we shall attempt to show this in the next chapter). Hence, development as understood in this research refers to *social transformation*. This implies the start of a major process: *building up a new society* with an entirely different set of values as well as alternative economic, political, legal and educational

⁹⁷ Development was now viewed not as *gradual change*, but as *liberation*. Liberation now refers to the inescapable moment of radical change from the oppressive status quo. The root causes of poverty and underdevelopment must be attacked.

structures which will create a just and equitable order.⁹⁸ It involves working towards the comprehensive wellbeing of all human beings.

Jesus took great interest in transforming his society. His intention was not to establish the church but to create a new society established on a just and equitable order. In order to achieve that he addressed the social, political and religious injustices in his time. His intention was not to establish the “kingdom of God”⁹⁹ that was to be understood purely on the “spiritual realm”.¹⁰⁰ Horsley points out that, “Far from being eschatological or apolitical, the kingdom of God was the overarching symbol of a locally based popular movement attempting a renewal of the people of Israel. Seen most dramatically in the exorcisms, Jesus appears to have been generating a “social revolution” (to use modern political parlance), in the confidence that God was in the process of effecting the “political revolution” against the imperial forces of domination.”¹⁰¹ Emilio Castro also supports this view of the reign of God by establishing that the socio-political dimensions are inseparable from the religious.¹⁰² Thus God’s activity was political and Jesus’ preaching of that

⁹⁸ Transformation, in this sense, flows from liberation. The humanist theme in the approach to development becomes rich and meaningful within this liberational and transformational framework. In the words of Peter Berger (cited by J. MOUTON, *Some Basic Issues: Research for Development*, Cape Town: EFSA, 1992, p.57), it now becomes possible to speak of development as “a vision of transformation and salvation.” I must point out that “social transformation” in the original and normative Biblical conceptualisation hardly meant development. It can hardly be maintained that the Biblical authors had the same sense of historicity and the changeability of social structures that we have today. However, we see in this the notion of development.

⁹⁹ Our understanding of the “Kingdom of God” can be seen in Chapter Three with further discussions in Chapter Six. However, it must be noted that the concept is deeply controversial, as the following footnote observes.

¹⁰⁰ It is not within the scope of this study to detail the controversy surrounding the concept of the “Kingdom of God”, however, W. G. KUMMEL, *Eschatological Expectation in the Proclamation of Jesus*, in BRUCE CHILTON (ed.), *The Kingdom God*, London: Fortress Press, 1984, pp. 36-37, sums it up for us: “On the one side are those who deny that Jesus ever spoke of a future coming of the reign of God or attribute to Jesus only a temporally completely indefinite expectation of the eschatological coming of the Son of Man. On the other side are those who categorically deny to Jesus any expectation of a near End or an imminent reign of God and seek to show that Jesus’ proclamation of the nearness of the reign of God does not stand in any temporal context, but rather that Jesus ignores the question of time because the vertical dimension of the Spirit cannot be temporal. This is not to say that there are not also numerous recent scholars who hold firmly to the assumption that Jesus counted on a future coming of the reign of God soon, in his own generation. Yet it must be said that this strictly “eschatological” understanding of Jesus’ preaching is at present being very seriously questioned.”

¹⁰¹ RICHARD A. HORSLEY, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987, p.167.

¹⁰² EMILIO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission: The Perspective of the Kingdom of God: An Ecumenical Inquiry*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1985.

activity was political - with obvious implications for the “imperial situation” then prevailing in Palestine.

The divine activity of the “kingdom of God” is focused on the needs and desires of people.¹⁰³ In fact Jesus’ preaching generally, and particularly his announcement of the reign of God, rarely calls attention explicitly to God, but concentrates on the implication of the presence of the ‘kingdom’ for people’s lives and how people must respond.¹⁰⁴

The Bible places a significant stress on the value of the human person created in the image of God. In the Gospels, Jesus is shown meeting people at the point of their need, being open to them and responding to them on a one to one basis. This is consistent with the whole Hebrew and Christian tradition, which is the deeply personal one of a covenant between God and God’s people. Most of the characters in the Gospels are social and political nobodies, fisherfolk and farmers, local officials and teachers, soldiers of the occupying forces, village women, sick and disabled people and prostitutes. It is these people that Jesus came to liberate. We see in this a particular focus on human development.

It can be seen then that Jesus worked towards the transformation of his community to bring about socio-economic and political justice which, for him, certainly characterised the reign of God, a view that will be strengthened throughout this study. Hence the Church today is also challenged to follow its Lord’s example as it takes sides with the poor, needy and the oppressed. The Church must work towards the transformation of society.

Braggs relates the concept of transformation to the Old Testament image of shalom and the New Testament concept of the “Kingdom of God”. His content-rich thoughts on transformation are

¹⁰³ NORMAN K. GOTTWALD & RICHARD A. HORSLEY (Eds.), *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, p. 408f.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

worth quoting in full as a background and reference point, in fact as a paradigm for the mission of the Church in the world.¹⁰⁵

God's purpose for humanity is that men and women be the *Imago Dei* – that they live as his image in the world, his co-creators and stewards, rather than as predators of creation. God intends that social structures reflect and promote justice, peace, sharing, and free participation for the well being of all. The goal of transformation is that God's purposes be realised, as is revealed in the Old Testament concept of shalom- harmony, peace, health, well-being, prosperity, justice- and in the New Testament image of the kingdom, which is both present and coming.

Transformation seeks to repel the evil social structures that exist in the present cosmos and to institute through the mission of the church the values of the kingdom of God over against the values of the principalities and powers of this world. The church is at the center of God's purpose for society, in order that now, through the church, the wisdom of God in all its varied forms might be made known...(Eph.3:10). Ron Sider suggests that perhaps the genuinely unique contribution of Christians to development is precisely the people of God- the Church – as a new community where all relationships are being transformed and redeemed.

Transformation is a joint enterprise between God and humanity in history, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process. It involves a transformation of the human condition, human relationships, and whole societies. The so-called developed, modernised world needs transformation to free itself from a secular, materialistic condition marked by broken relationships, violence, economic subjugation, and devastation of nature; and the underdeveloped world needs transformation from the subhuman condition of poverty,

¹⁰⁵ The beginning of Chapter Three refers to other paradigms of mission as embraced by the Christian church.

premature death, hunger, exposure, oppression, disease, and fear. Whereas development tends to be a term that the West applies to the Third World, transformation is equally applicable to both the overdeveloped and the underdeveloped worlds.¹⁰⁶

[Social] Transformation, then, is an important concept for Christians to keep in mind as a paradigm for their own involvement in development. The Christian church, right from its inception, has always attempted to transform society. And perhaps in some circles mission was actually perceived as development. This is what we intend to show in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁶ W.G. BRAGG, From Development to Transformation. *The Church in Response to Human Need*, V. Samuel and C. Sugden (Eds.), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 39-40.

CHAPTER THREE : MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Chapter we stated that social transformation has always been a necessary part of the mission of the Christian Church. This chapter attempts to show that the concept of development is as old as the Christian church nuanced in the concepts of charity, welfare, and 'love for the neighbour' as the church expressed a concern for the poor.¹ The church has always had a notion and involvement in development even though it may not have necessarily used the word itself. The church only formally embraced the word "development" in the 1960's. However, even before we attempt to do the latter we must first define our understanding of the Christian mission.

3.2 WHAT IS MISSION?

Attempts to define Christian mission have resulted in prolonged and relentless debates. Even more difficult is the task of determining the aims of mission. If we attempt a more specifically theological synopsis of "mission" as the concept has traditionally been used, we note that it has been paraphrased as (a) propagation of the faith, (b) expansion of the reign of God, (c) conversion of the heathen, and (d) the founding of new churches.² Lesslie Newbigin has narrowed these into two terms described as Mission and Missions. He states that:

The Mission of the church is everything that the church is sent into the world to do: preaching the gospel, healing the sick, caring for the poor, teaching the children, improving international and interracial relations, attacking injustice. The Missions of the

¹ In this Chapter I shall also show that only small groups of Christians remained faithful to the care of the poor. The wider church deviated from this responsibility as it embraced the ideology (economic and political) of its time. So even though I refer to the church what I really have in mind are these small groups of Christians whom I shall refer to in this Chapter.

² K. MULLER, *Mission Theology: An Introduction*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1987, pp. 31-34.

church is the concern that in places where there are no Christians there should be Christians. In other words, Missions means to plant churches through evangelism.³

Lesslie Newbigin further adds that the aim of missions should be the establishment of a new Christian community that is as broad as society and is as true to the national situation. He has in mind here the idea of Christianisation that is highly questionable today in a world that is characterised by religious pluralism and democracy. Moreover, Christianity has lost its position of privilege. In many parts of the world, even in regions where the Church had been established as a powerful factor for more than a millennium, it is today regarded as a liability rather than an asset to be a Christian.⁴ The encouragement of inter-faith dialogue and cooperation today also draws the goal of mission as Christianisation into question.

Jerald D. Gort argues that such a Christian community is not only characterised by reconciliation and peace but also by justice.⁵ This new redeemed community is then equipped for their mission, their life assignment which is to teach, preach, heal, care for the poor and attack injustice. Karl Barth, however, warns us against the dangers of establishing such an exclusive Christian community.⁶ He points out that the people's chief concern then is with the saving of their souls, or their experiences of grace and salvation; in short, with establishing their personal relationship with God.⁷ Barth regards this whole understanding of becoming and being a

³ PAUL G. SCHROTENBOER, Rethinking Missions – In Kingdom Perspective, in *International Reformed Bulletin*, Number 48, 1972, p.6. See also LESSLIE NEWBIGIN, Mission and Missions, *Christianity Today*, August 1, 1960, p. 23.

⁴ In the course of this century the missionary enterprise and the missionary idea have undergone some profound modifications. These came about, partly as a response to the recognition of the fact that the church is indeed not only the recipient of God's merciful grace but sometimes also of his wrath. We have seen this in the apartheid church in South Africa.

⁵ JERALD D. GORT, Melbourne 1980: A Missiological Interpretation, *International Review of Missions*, Vol. LXIX, numbers 276-277, October/January 1980/81, p.568.

⁶ D. J. BOSCH, Evangelism and Social Transformation, in *Theologia Evangelica*, Vol. XVI-2, June 1983, p.50.

⁷ Barth develops his ecclesiology in three phases. His reflections on soteriology as *justification* are followed by a section on "The Holy Spirit and the *Gathering* of the Christian Community". His exposition on soteriology as *sanctification* leads to a discourse on "The Holy Spirit and the *Upbuilding* of the Christian Community". And his discussion of soteriology as *vocation* is followed by a treatise on "The Holy Spirit and the *Sending* of the Christian Community. See DAVID BOSCH, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, p.373.

Christian as thoroughly unbiblical and ego-centric.⁸ What makes someone a Christian is not primarily his or her personal experiences of grace and redemption, but his or her ministry. Indeed, the Christian receives forgiveness, justification and sanctification in order to become a servant of God in the world.

Lesslie Newbigin, however, is not unaware of such criticism. His immediate focus with regards to mission seems to be ecclesiocentric but he carefully points out that this is not the only goal of mission. He states that in the past we have largely limited the goal of missions to the conversion of unbelievers and the planting of churches. This, he asserts, must remain the first objective. The trouble comes when this becomes the sum and substance of our missionary endeavour.⁹ He thus indicates that fighting against injustices in the world should also be the task of mission.

Writing in a similar vein the Danish theologian, Johannes Aagaard, states that God works through one extraordinary mission and many ordinary missions.¹⁰ The *extraordinary mission* is the mission of Jesus Christ, the mission of the church – manifested in the sending of Jesus Christ and in the calling of the church to its particular vocation of witnessing to the reign of God.

The *ordinary missions* are the missions of the nations, the missions of all historical agents that co-operate in the building up of human community.¹¹ Through all aspects of human history, political, economic, cultural, and social human beings are called, as communities and individuals, to participate in God's providential care for the world. This is a useful distinction, but it cannot be absolutised because Christians and churches are also necessarily involved in the so-called ordinary missions through diaconal (service) ministries by virtue of the fact that the church is a social institution and has in itself socio-political consequences.

⁸ Ibid., p.51.

⁹ PAUL G. SCHROTENBOER, Op. cit., p.7.

¹⁰ EMILO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission*, Geneva: WCC, 1985, p.67.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

Having said this much then, let me state that our view of mission is not limited to the 'mere saving of souls', or the 'planting of churches'. Hoekendijk criticised the 'church-centric' view of mission pointing out that it does not fully correspond with the biblical view of mission.¹² Such a view of mission, though still prevalent, has lost its relevance in the present century.¹³ This shift can be seen in the emerging views of the church and its mission. In the emerging ecclesiology, the church is seen as essentially missionary in its nature. The church is not the sender but the one sent (1 Peter 2: 9). Its mission ("being sent") is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its mission. Missionary work is not so much the work of the church as simply the Church at work.¹⁴ More so, it is the church at work in the world. This missionary dimension evokes *intentional*, that is, *direct* involvement, in society; it actually moves beyond the walls of the church and engages in missionary work such as evangelism¹⁵ and work for justice and peace. The understanding of the church as sacrament, sign, and instrument has led to a new perception of the relationship between the church and the world.¹⁶ Mission is viewed as "God's turning to the world", this represents a fundamentally new approach to theology.¹⁷ This does not mean that the previous paradigm must be cast aside as utterly worthless. Rather, the argument will be that – in the light of a fundamentally new situation and precisely so as to remain faithful to the true nature of mission – mission must be understood and undertaken in an imaginatively new manner today. In the words of Pope John XXIII, spoken in 1963, "(In) Today's world, the needs made plain in the last fifty years, and a deeper understanding of doctrine have brought us to a new situation ... *It is not that the Gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better*".¹⁸

¹² J.C. HOEKENDIJK, The Church in Missionary Thinking, in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. XLI, number 163, 1952, p. 332.

¹³ Even the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in South Africa are showing a greater interest in community work, e.g. soup kitchens, skills training, etc.

¹⁴ T.F. STRANSKY, Evangelization, Missions, and Social Action: A Roman Catholic Perspective, *Review and Expositor* vol. 79, pp. 343-351.

¹⁵ Even the concept of "evangelism" has a plethora of definitions. See BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, Op.cit., pp. 409-420. Our understanding of evangelism involves a broader definition than 'merely saving souls' (conversion).

¹⁶ This is contained in the emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission.

¹⁷ L. HOEDEMAEKER, Het volk Gods en de einden der aarde, in *Oecumenische inleiding*, 1988, pp. 167-180.

¹⁸ Quoted in G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988, p. xIv.

In the light of all this, there is a need today for a new definition of mission which is all embracing and encompassing. A new *comprehensive* approach to mission is called for which has a message for both the *whole world* and the *whole person*.¹⁹ Kritzinger points out that mission involves the whole person in her or his total situation in response to the whole gospel.²⁰ Mission is done in the world. Its context is the whole of God's creation. He sees in this three biblical notions that together delineate the essentials of mission. The terms *kerygma* (preaching), *koinonia* (fellowship) and *diakonia* (service) in combination describe the main aspects of the witness (*marturia*) of the 'kingdom'.²¹

What then is mission today? Emilio Castro answers this question somewhat succinctly. He states that God's mission and ours is to bring in the "Kingdom".²² And the goal of the 'kingdom' is life in its fullness. Hence the 'kingdom' has to do with the welfare of the whole person, not excluding the social, political and economical aspects of life. Since God is interested in the life of the whole person, so must we if we are to take our responsibilities of mission seriously. Verkuyl supports this view by stating that both in the Old and New Testaments, God by His words and deeds claims that he is intent on bringing the "kingdom of God" to expression and restoring his liberating domain of authority. Hence Verkuyl states that the ultimate goal of the *Missio Dei* is the "kingdom of God".²³ From the countless biblical images and symbols which describes God's intentions, he selects this one as the clearest expression of God and his purpose.²⁴

We therefore select the "kingdom of God" as the central theme around which to understand mission. It would be difficult to find a more inspiring biblical theme when we face the challenges of the contemporary situation. This, however, does not mean that our choice is a matter of

¹⁹ J.C. HOEKENDIJK, The Call to Evangelism, *International Review of Mission*, Vol. XXXIX, number 154, 1950, p. 170.

²⁰ J. J. KRITZINGER, *The South African Context for Mission*, Cape Town: Lux Verbi, 1988, p. 34.

²¹ Ibid.

²² EMILIO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission*, Op. cit., pp.56-60.

²³ J. VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1978, p. 203.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

convenience. The Bangkok Assembly of the WCC of 1973 supports our view in the following statement:

The selection of the symbol of the kingdom of God is not an arbitrary one: Firstly, because it is the central concern of Jesus Christ himself. Secondly, because we believe that it responds to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that is calling our attention once again to that ongoing memory of the kingdom, to provide the intellectual and inspirational categories that will help the church in its missionary obedience today.²⁵

Kritzinger also selects the theme of the “kingdom of God” in his definition of Christian mission: “We understand Christian mission to be a wide and inclusive complex of activities aimed at the realisation of the reign of God in history. It includes evangelism but is at the same time much wider than that. Perhaps one could say that mission is the ‘cutting edge’ of the Christian movement – that activist streak in the church’s life that refuses to accept the world as it is and keeps on trying to change it, prodding it on towards God’s final reign of justice and peace.”²⁶

Thus far we have given justification for selecting the theme of the ‘Kingdom of God’ as the goal of mission. Perhaps we should now offer more clarity on what we hold the “kingdom of God” to be, since this is an often misunderstood term. Biblically speaking then, what is the “kingdom of God”? It has been the tendency to frequently narrow its borders to include only the inner life of the individual.²⁷ Verkuyl points out that such an interpretation is not wrong; it is, however, inadequate as the preaching of Jesus so obviously treats issues which extend beyond the individual soul.²⁸

²⁵ WCC: Bangkok Assembly 1973. Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, Geneva: WCC, 1973.

²⁶ NICO BOTHA, KLIPPIES KRITZINGER & TINYIKO MALULEKE, Crucial issues for Christian mission – A missiological analysis of contemporary South Africa. In *International Review of Mission* 83, January, 1986, p. 21.

²⁷ We have already shown how the ecumenical church has challenged this view in Chapter 2.

²⁸ J. VERKUYL, Op. cit., p.197.

Moreover, some interpretations restrict the 'kingdom' exclusively to the church. The 'kingdom' and the church are interchangeable terms.²⁹ For instance, the old Roman Catholic view maintained that "*extra ecclesia nulla salus*" (only in the church is there salvation).³⁰ The old Roman Catholic view obviously mistook the church for the 'kingdom'. But many scholars are quick to point out that the terms *Basileia* and *Ecclesia*, though related, are anything but synonymous.³¹ The church then is not the 'kingdom' but a pointer to the "kingdom of God."³² A further emphasis on this point can be observed in the words of Wilhelm Anderson in his contribution to the missionary conference at Willingen (1952):

(Even) the church cannot be the starting point for a theology of mission: the origin of mission is found in the triune God, from whose nature and purpose the church receives the commission, impulse and power to engage in mission.³³

Tamaram (1938) also supports this view pointing out that the church itself must stand ever under the ideal of the "Kingdom of God" which alone can guard it against becoming an end in itself and hold it true to God's purpose for it.³⁴

Still, others claim that the 'kingdom' has come when the spiritual needs of humankind are satisfied; 'Kingdom' involves the forgiveness of sins.³⁵ Castro, however, states that nowhere does the New Testament spiritualise the "kingdom of God" or limits it to the spiritual side of nature.³⁶ Verkuyl points out that the 'Kingdom' to which the Bible testifies involves a proclamation and a realisation of a total salvation, one which covers the whole range of human

²⁹ Ibid., p. 198.

³⁰ See also R.N. FLEW, *Jesus and His Church*, p.13; H. ROBERTS, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, pp. 84, 107.

³¹ G.E. LADD, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1975, p.111.

³² Ibid., p.113.

³³ WILHELM ANDERSEN, *Towards A Theology of Mission: A Study of The Encounter Between the Missionary Enterprise and the Church and its Theology*, I. M. C. Research Pamphlet Number 2, London: S.C.M., 1955, p.10.

³⁴ Unpublished Report by the World Council of Churches.

³⁵ J.VERKUYL, Ibid., p.200.

³⁶ EMILIO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission*, Ibid., p.48f.

needs and destroys every pocket of evil and grief affecting humankind. He adds that 'kingdom' in the New Testament has a breadth and scope which is unsurpassed; it embraces heaven as well as earth, world history as well as the whole cosmos.³⁷ Verkuyl further states that:

The Kingdom of God is that new order of affairs begun in Christ which, when finally completed by him, will involve a proper restoration not only of man's (sic) relationship to God but also of those between sexes, generations, races, and even between man (sic) and nature.³⁸

Judging from this then, what may we say is the "Kingdom of God"? In 1 Cor.15:24 Paul speaks of Jesus Christ 'handing over the kingdom to the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and authority and power'. In this text the 'kingdom' is understood as life free from the reign of all those forces which enslave humanity. These 'powers' are understood as enemies which act against human life here and now – the final enemy being death (1 Cor.15:42). By contrast, the 'kingdom' is life where human beings are no longer subjected to destructive forces. In this sense, the 'kingdom' is related to helping people to become more human.

In another sense, the 'kingdom' is the sphere of life where God's Spirit is in control, where justice, peace and joy are experienced completely and permanently (Rom.14:17). It is the messianic banquet where everyone will enjoy equally and to the full God's noble gifts, experiencing how another's enjoyment of being human enhances one's own. It is the place where God will be 'all in all' (1Cor.15:28): that is, recognised universally as the source of all life, justice, love, wisdom and truth, the only redeemer, the lord of history and the righteous and merciful judge.

³⁷ J. VERKUYL, *Ibid.*, p.198.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

Once again Verkuyl sums this up well, when he says: 'It is the creation which has achieved its goal'. Rauschenbusch takes it even further stating that 'the kingdom of God is humanity organised according to the will of God'.³⁹

By defining mission as the establishing of the "kingdom of God" we are attempting to give a broad definition to mission. We are categorically stating that God's concern is with the whole world and with all humanity. We state with W. Pannenberg that all history is God's history and whatever happens in the world today is also of special concern to God.⁴⁰ Tambaram (1938) pointed out that "the kingdom of God is within history and yet beyond history."⁴¹ Whilst we accept the latter, yet we must reinforce the fact that the 'kingdom' is to be understood in present reality as we work towards the liberation and humanisation of the poor and the oppressed.⁴²

Unlike Lesslie Newbigin or Johannes Aagaard, we do not see a dichotomy between mission and missions or between extraordinary and ordinary missions. The one singular mission is the "Kingdom of God" which rules in justice and righteousness. And to this end we see the aim of mission as *humanisation*. This view is supported in the North American report at the Uppsala Assembly in 1967:

We have lifted up humanisation as the goal of mission because we believe that more than others it communicates in our period of history the meaning of the messianic goal.

In another time the goal of God's redemptive work might best have been described in terms of man (sic) turning towards God ... The fundamental question was that of the true God, and the church responded to that question by pointing to him. It was assuming that the purpose of mission was Christianisation, bringing man (sic) to God through Christ

³⁹ W. RAUSCHENBUSH, *Christianity And The Social Crisis*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1959, p.13.

⁴⁰ WOLFHART PANNENBERG, *Revelation as History*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1969, pp.125-130.

⁴¹ See *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXXII, NUMBER 288, October 1983, p.525.

⁴² See again Chapter Two, footnote number 100.

and his church. Today the fundamental question is much more that of *true* man, and the dominant concern of the missionary congregation must therefore be to point to *humanity in Christ as the goal of mission*.⁴³ (Italics added)

Nürnberg holds a similar view of Christian mission. He states that the “ultimate goal of the biblical God is the *comprehensive wellbeing* of all human beings within the context of the comprehensive wellbeing of their entire social and natural contexts. The Old Testament calls this *shalom*, the New Testament calls it the kingdom of God or the age to come.”⁴⁴ Nürnberg states that, “comprehensive wellbeing is meant to cover all dimensions of reality: body and mind; individual, community, society and humankind as a whole; the present and all future generations; social structures and natural environments.”⁴⁵ If the ultimate intention of God is the comprehensive wellbeing of his creation, the specific targets of God’s redemptive action are *particular deficiencies* in wellbeing.⁴⁶ Such deficiencies can occur in any dimension of life. To understand God’s mission in its total context, therefore, we have to analyse the human need structure and address them.⁴⁷ In this sense then mission can be seen as development. Therefore, as Barth points out, those who engage in mission assume the role of a servant of God.⁴⁸ Their singular purpose is to bring the world into the just and righteous rule of God, at the same time speaking and acting against all forms of injustice and dehumanising structures. This then is their ministry to help people become more human. This is what we understand development and social transformation to be.

With this understanding of mission we shall now endeavour to show that the Christian church has always had a *notion* of development in its mission and theology. We shall attempt to

⁴³ World Council of Churches, *The Church for Others and The Church for the World*, Geneva: WCC, 1967, p.78.

⁴⁴ KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *An economic vision for South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: Encounter Publications, 1994, p.5.

⁴⁵ KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty & Pollution*, Op. cit., p.167.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.168.

⁴⁷ Mission targets the entire spectrum of human needs. Needs are historically and contextually specific. To be relevant, mission has to establish where the needs of its social environment are located.

⁴⁸ DAVID BOSCH, Evangelism and Social Transformation, in *Theologia Evangelica*, Vol. XVI-2, June 1983, p.51.

demonstrate this by examining the church's concern for the poor as it addressed *human needs* in given periods in its history. We shall also show that the influence of the church's socio-political and economic environment often determined the church's response and ministry to the poor. Consequently the church was influenced more by ideology than by its theology.

Mission has to do with development. Those who do not see it this way usually have a very narrow view of the biblical definition of mission. As long as we see mission as the transformation of individuals and society to bring in the righteous and just rule of God then mission is in every sense development. With this view in mind, missionaries worked for the transformation of society. Their aim was to bring in the reign of God and to establish a better society - one in keeping with God's will for justice and righteousness that made people to embrace their humanity as those made in the 'image of God'. We shall attempt to show this in the following section.

3.3 THE CHURCH AND MISSION

The Church of Jesus Christ, especially its missionary arm, has normally understood the transformation of society to be an essential part of its task.⁴⁹ While the focal point of missions has been to communicate the Good News of Christ, to call men and women to repentance and faith, and to baptise them into the church, it has also involved a process of teaching them to "observe all things" that Jesus commanded.

Christians have assumed that this obedience would lead to the transformation of their physical, social and spiritual lives. Sometimes this has been well done, sometimes poorly done. But missionaries have always implicitly assumed that the reception and the living out of the gospel would begin to transform both individual and community life. And more often than not, specific

⁴⁹ To transform, dictionaries say, is "to change in character or condition, to alter in function or nature." The noun *transformation* then refers to the action of bringing about such a change. The Greek-derived synonym of this Latin-based word is *metamorphosis*.

steps were taken and institutions were established to aid this process. While we recognise today that the missionaries often envisioned a model of the transformed community that looked suspiciously like the ones they knew in their own cultures, there is no doubt that this transforming dimension was an essential aspect of mission. Nor can there be any doubt that much was accomplished which was highly beneficial.

Furthermore, Christian missions have also been a result of renewal movements in the church, e.g. Pietism. Such movements, more often than not, attempted to transform their own societies, or at least to focus on both evangelisation and service to the poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed. Thus, it is natural that the missions coming out of such movements took the same concerns for the poor and oppressed to their fields of labour.⁵⁰ The basic theological foundation for these missions was the command of Jesus Christ to go into all the world with the Good News, to call people to faith in him, and to show the love of Christ to the needy, the hungry, and the poor. This desire was seen as a valid ministry in itself, but it was also seen as a witness to the greater gift of God - the forgiveness and eternal life which came in Christ.

We shall now attempt to see how the Christian Church right from its inception was involved in the transformation of society. Our attempt is not to provide a history of Christian mission per se but to show that the church has always had a concept of development in its mission and ministry. Perhaps in some ways we are attempting to re-write church history in the perspective of development.

3.3.1 The Early Church

Jesus and the apostles functioned within the society in which they were found. Hence the socio-economic and political factors of the day were to greatly influence the teachings of Jesus and his disciples. In taking sides with the poor, Jesus attacked the Pharisees and Sadducees for their self-

⁵⁰ See EDGAR J. ELLISTON, *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*, USA: Word Publishing, 1989, p.37ff.

indulgence and greed (Matt. 23: 25-33). They were known for their oppression and exploitation of the poor peasants. Society was conditioned by social and group distinctions and it relied on a slave economy.⁵¹ Jesus' preaching about the 'Kingdom' made it abundantly clear that God took seriously the concerns of the poor and needy: the poor would be blessed in the realisation that the "Kingdom of God" was theirs (Luke 6: 20-26); even tax collectors and harlots would gain entry before those who appeared to be religious and respectable (Matt. 21: 31-32), and the rich and full would become acquainted with want and hunger. The arrival of the 'kingdom' contained the seeds of economic revolution and social reversal. With all these we, however, do not find a "pattern" of a full-orbed program of development in the life of the early Church. This, however, radically changed when the Church moved out beyond the borders of the Graeco-Roman frontiers.

Bruce Winter in his careful and well documented discussion of public life in the first century shows how early Christians took part in public life in the Greco-Roman communities in which they lived.⁵² He argues that "the early church in fact taught a civic consciousness among its members".⁵³ Christians were not to abandon life in public sphere (*politeia*) but to address their obligations as citizens from the perspective of the Christian ethic. Winter holds that the Christian community, while maintaining a commitment to the tradition of benefaction of the classical city, required all its citizens, whatever their financial resources, to contribute to the welfare of the city even in the face of persecution. They thus saw themselves as practicing a new and strange *politeia*. To support his position, Winter sets out the role of Christians in the main areas of public life in a city under Roman rule.⁵⁴ Winter concludes that "the Christian social ethic... was an unprecedented social revolution of the ancient benefaction tradition".⁵⁵ Every Christian had an

⁵¹ RICHARD BATEY, *Jesus and the Poor*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p.5.

⁵² BRUCE WINTER, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens. First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994, pp.200f.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.209.

obligation to promote the welfare of the city and help the poor, even without the rewards that were traditionally accorded the benefactor.

David Bosch points out that transformation (humanisation) has been a part of the Christian mission and influence in society right from the beginning.⁵⁶ In a society described as “macabre, lost in despair, perversion, and superstition,” Christian communities emerged as something entirely new in the populous and far-flung Roman Empire.⁵⁷

The early church was on the periphery of society. It found many of its earliest adherents among slaves, women, and foreigners - people who had no special influence on the shape of society. Yet it was to have an impact on society, especially over the next two millennia.

Christianity began by preaching and practicing the “*gospel of love and charity*,”⁵⁸ which included almsgiving and care for widows, orphans, slaves, travelers, the sick, the imprisoned, and the poor.⁵⁹ Driven by the love of Jesus believers went out and expressed their love for the neighbour. The early disciples showed true mercy and compassion. Peter, who had no silver or gold on his person, gave a crippled beggar what he did have: the gift of health (Acts 3:6). Tabitha (Dorcas) is cited as an early disciple “full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:36).

Generally speaking, the New Testament sees the ministry of mercy not only as an individual obligation, but also as a corporate endeavour of the church, to be carried out by the church itself.⁶⁰ “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who

⁵⁶ DAVID BOSCH, *Toward Evangelism in Context*, in *The Church in Response to Human need*, Ibid., p. 180.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ For more information on this see, ADOLF VON HARNACK, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, New York: Harper, pp. 147-98.

⁵⁹ Perhaps the most conspicuous quality of Christians was their charity, their generosity toward the poor. Matthew's Gospel is especially emphatic on the necessity of clothing the naked and visiting the sick (5:42 to 6:4; 19:16-22, and in Acts we see individual acts of charity (3:1-10; 9:36; 10:2-4) as well as more institutionalised provision for the poor – the distributions to the widows at Jerusalem (6:1) and the collection for victims of famine (11:27-30; 24:17). There are many exhortations to charity (Acts 20:33-35; Rom. 12:13; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:3; Heb. 13:1-3; James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17-23).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). Thus members of the first Christian congregation “sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45). The early Christians in Jerusalem were organised on determinedly egalitarian lines, practicing community ownership of property. Women played as prominent a role as men did. Slaves and freed men and women shared equally with the freeborn.⁶¹ Within the group, at least in the early decades, there was a conscious rejection of the status-conscious norms of society, a rejection summarized in the admonition that within the community of the baptised there was “neither Jew nor Greek .. slave nor free ... male nor female” (Gal. 3:28; cf. James 2:2-12).

As the church spread through the Roman Empire its ministries of mercy underwent considerable development. Social relief became a monopoly of the church in Rome and Alexandria, where it was manifested in distributions to the poor and in the establishment and upkeep of hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the aged.⁶² By the fourth century the church was also bringing relief to people whom inflation had plunged into distress.

During the time of Constantine the church enjoyed much favour. Constantine’s attempt to create a Christian empire eventually resulted in the state taking over much of the responsibility of the church. For example, the state now assumed as its responsibility the care of the poor though the church continued with this on a small scale.⁶³ To Constantine himself is credited the observation that a changed religion involves a changed social order. As a matter of fact the Constantinian policy embraced two parallel but distinct objects. These objects may be described as follows:⁶⁴ (1) to create a world fit for Christians to live in; (2) to make the world safe for Christianity. The former represents the attitude of the emperor to individual believers; it finds expression in an extensive scheme of moral and social reform designed to satisfy their demands and to promote their interests. The latter reflects his views regarding the Church as an institution, and it

⁶¹ JOHN STAMBAUGH & DAVID BALCH, *The Social World of the First Christians*, Great Britain: Anchor Press, 1986, p.55.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See CHARLES NORRIS COCHRANE, *Christianity And Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*, New York: Oxford University Press., 1974, pp.191-211.

manifests itself in the project of a Christian establishment conceived more or less along the lines of existing pagan state-cults.

Constantine's reforms were limited to a certain tenderness towards dependents, women, children, and slaves. Women, for example, were no longer to be compelled to undergo trial in the public courts, widows and orphans were to have special consideration at the hands of the judiciary and not to be forced to travel long distances for hearings.⁶⁵ A law which forbade the separation mitigated the hardships of slavery by sale of man and wife, and the practice of manumission was encouraged, especially if it took place in church. In other respects, also, the emperor tried to maintain the cohesion of the family, especially by prohibiting divorce except on statutory grounds; to the specific exclusion of 'frivolous pretexts' such as drunkenness, gambling, and infidelity.

Constantine also called for the prohibition of gladiatorial exhibitions and the abolition of crucifixion as a form of punishment, no doubt out of respect for the memory of Christ. With this tasteless expression of Christian sentiment may be compared the enactment which forbade the branding of human beings on the face 'because the face is made in the image of God', while slaves, criminals, and even conscripts continued to be branded on other parts of the body.⁶⁶

In the earliest stage of his public career, Constantine maintained a more flexible though still strictly aristocratic type of society. Once in power, however, he seems to have abandoned any such notion; for he maintained in all its rigor the legal framework of the status-society.⁶⁷ He

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The Roman world was divided into upper and lower categories. At the peak of the socioeconomic pyramid was the emperor, supported by the other members of the imperial household and by the officials of the central administration in Rome. Below the aristocracy, the great mass of the population lived its lives. A large intermediate level consisted of the small landowners, craftsmen, and shopkeepers and also the middle and lower ranks of Roman citizens in the army, from centurions down to ordinary legionary soldiers and veterans. Below these merchants and craftsmen were the really poor, who had no property and supported themselves by piecework at the docks, in construction, or on farms. The lowest legal status of all were the slaves who were considered less than human – they worked as chattel gangs on ships, farms, road construction and mines. See J. STAMBURGH & D. BALCH, *Ibid.*, pp.112-113.

promoted the tendency towards social evolution upon an occupational basis; in each and every case seeking to attach to the legal person fixed obligations commensurate with the privileges to which his status in the community entitled him; and, at the same time, scattering immunities and exemptions with a generous hand among favoured groups whose services he regarded as peculiarly valuable to the regime. This programme was said to demoralise the middle groups while, at the same time, it transformed the free peasant into a serf. A jurist declares that, "though Christianity came to proclaim the gospel to the masses, it arrived too late to effect any decisive reform in existing economic conditions."⁶⁸

Post-Constantine churches spent great sums on the work of ransoming captives. St Ambrose proposed selling the precious vessels on the altars of his church in Milan to do just that. He declared, "There is one incentive which must impel us all to charity; it is pity for the misery of our neighbors and the desire to alleviate it, with all the means that lie in our power, and more besides."⁶⁹

In spite of what we have just noted, however, it can hardly be maintained that the early Christians deliberately attempted to restructure the empire. Instead, during the first two centuries when Christians constituted a small minority, their concern was to help those who were dehumanised and oppressed by providing practical help. Their concerns were motivated by compassion and characterised by communal justice and the love of God.

Throughout the ages the Church has been involved in the life of humankind, in making of nationhood, building of culture, structuring of society with its functions and institutions and in shaping the form and quality of political systems. True, in the pagan environment of the Roman Empire, the Christian Church formed a "Third Race", and the "union and discipline of the Christian republic gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 204.

⁶⁹ WALDRON SCOTT, Mercy and Social Transformation, in *The Church in Response to Human Need*, Op. cit., p208

Roman Empire.⁷⁰ The Church thus became a corrective or conditioner of culture, but it did not remain neutral, inactive and indifferent in the course of cultural unfolding. It worked toward the development of a new human community established in the will of God, seeking justice and equity for the poor and marginalised.

3.3.2 The Medieval Church

The medieval period was built on a system of feudal hierarchy. In this hierarchy, the lord of the manor, who, in turn, owed allegiance to and was protected by a higher overlord, protected the serf, or peasant. And so the system went, ending eventually with the king. This hierarchical and systemic differentiation was generally biologically based, with birthright crucial to one's place in feudal society, as was hereditary provenance. Those who worked were usually assigned to the lowest classes; those who escaped the burdens of ordinary labour were of higher class standing.⁷¹ Such a structure led to the exploitation and oppression of those lower in the hierarchy.

Custom and tradition are the key to understanding medieval relationships. In place of laws as we know them today, the custom of the manor governed. The basic economic institution of medieval rural life was the manor, which contained within it two separate and distinct classes: noblemen, or lords of the manor, and serfs who were not really slaves.⁷² The lord lived off the labour of the serfs who farmed his fields and paid taxes in kind and money according to the custom of the manor. Similarly, the lord gave protection, supervision, and administration of justice according to the custom of the manor. It must be added that although the system did rest on reciprocal obligations, the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the lord led to a system in which, by any standard, the serf was exploited in the extreme.

⁷⁰ EDGAR ELLISTON, *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁷¹ E.K. HUNT & HOWARD J. SHERMAN, *Economics: An Introduction to Traditional and Radical Views*, New York: Harper & Row, 1981, p.4

⁷² *Ibid.*

The Catholic Church was by far the largest owner of land during the Middle Ages. The bishops and abbots, in exercising a primary loyalty to the church in Rome, provided a strong central government throughout this period. Hence the manor functioned on both a religious and secular basis. The dominant economic institutions in the towns were the guilds who were also involved with social and religious questions.⁷³ They regulated their members' conduct in all their activities: personal, social, religious, and economic. Although the guilds did regulate very carefully the production and sale of commodities, they were less concerned with making profits than with saving their members' souls. Salvation demanded that the individual lead an orderly life based on church teachings and custom.

The church advocated a moral code sometimes called the Christian corporate ethic, reflecting the fact that all of society was considered a single entity or corporation. This led to a strong paternalistic obligation toward the common people, the poor, and the general welfare of society.⁷⁴

It was accepted that some were to be rich, and that the poor had to subordinate to the leadership of the wealthy. However, it was equally emphasised that the wealthy had an obligation to use their riches to help the poor. Hence riches and wealth were not condemned but greed, selfish acquisitiveness, covetousness and the lust for wealth were consistently condemned by the Christian paternalist ethic. Although this cannot be described as development yet what we do see here is a concern for the poor. However, the support of wealth (and not greed or selfish acquisitiveness) was to obscure the absolute biblical focus on the poor that Jesus advocated.

The teachings of Christ in the New Testament carry on part of the Mosaic tradition relevant to economic ideology. He taught the necessity of being concerned with the welfare of one's brother, the importance of charity and almsgiving. He condemned the rich and praised the poor as he took their side. The medieval church in many ways attempted to remain true to the teachings of its Lord as it set out to develop its society politically, economically, socially and religiously. However, whilst on the one hand the Church drew up guidelines for helping the poor, and their

⁷³ Ibid., p.6.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

assistance was structured accordingly, on the other hand, certain bishops began to allow believers to adopt a more comfortable life style. So the problem of the poor was attacked only at the level of its consequences and not of its causes. The poor were still dependent on the rich and, although some of the rich showed great generosity, the institutional and structural injustice which generated poverty was not dealt with at its roots.

The key figure to shape the medieval paradigm of mission thinking was Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430) though, strictly speaking, he preceded the Middle Ages, at least if one takes this period to have begun around 600.⁷⁵ Augustine's circumstances and his reaction to them, influenced deeply by his personal history, were to shape both the theology and the understanding of mission of subsequent centuries. His reaction to an English monk, Pelagius, and the Donatists in North Africa essentially directed the missionary paradigm of the Middle Ages.⁷⁶

Augustine maintained that God became human in order to save human souls that are hurtling to destruction. Hence not the reconciliation of the universe but the redemption of the soul stands in the center. The theology of Augustine could not but spawn a dualistic view of reality, which became second nature in Western Christianity - the tendency to regard salvation as a private matter and to ignore the world, though this was not the view of Augustine himself. This particular view gave rise to the tendency of seeing mission as an attempt to develop the church rather than get involved with the world.⁷⁷ Augustine, however, promoted the involvement of the church with the world. In this respect he maintained that the church's involvement with social

⁷⁵ DAVID J. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999, pp.214f.

⁷⁶ For more on this see, W. H. C. FREND, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1965, p. 46. See also H. C. FREND, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1985, pp.242-3.

⁷⁷ D. J. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, Ibid., p. 216.

change in relation to the poor was personal charity.⁷⁸ Augustine was the architect of the doctrine of charity: obedience to God required a genuine concern for the needs of the poor.⁷⁹

There is, however, also a more negative side to his stance: authority and holiness were regarded as adhering in the institutional church whether or not these moral and theological qualities were in evidence. Since the worldwide church, founded by the apostles, was the only true church, whoever left it was self-evidently wrong; those who severed their links with the Catholic Church also severed their relationship with God. Visible unity and salvation went hand in hand. The mission focus of the Middle Ages was to bring people into the church. We see this quite powerfully in Augustine's controversy with the Donatists, where he argued that they had to be forced to return to the Catholic fold.⁸⁰

The Middle Ages also saw the rise of the monastic movement which greatly contributed to the Christianisation of Europe.⁸¹ Only monasticism, says Niebuhr saved the medieval church from acquiescence, petrification, and the loss of its vision and truly revolutionary character.⁸² For upward of seven hundred years, from the fifth century to the twelfth, the monastery was not only the center of culture and civilisation, but also of mission.

Monasticism which has its origins in the Eastern church, particularly in Egypt, later took root in the West. When it did evolve in the West, it differed from Eastern monasticism in several respects. For one thing, Eastern monasticism was, on the whole, an individual affair. The solitary ascetics of the desert often shunned community life. Western monasticism, by contrast, was

⁷⁸ The material on Augustine and the Reformation is from, *Through a Glass Darkly: A History of the Church's Vision of the Poor and Poverty* by Carter H. Lindeberg of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, an unpublished lecture. November, 1975.

⁷⁹ R. SIDER, *Evangelicals and Development: Towards a Theology of Social Change*, Op. cit. p.20.

⁸⁰ CARL ERDMANN, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p.9.

⁸¹ For more information on Monasticism see: W. WALKER, *A History of the Christian Church*, Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1976, pp.125-128, 198-201. Also K. S. LATOURETTE, *A History of Christianity*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1978, pp. 221-239

⁸² Quoted in BOSCH, *Ibid.*, p.230.

essentially communal and carefully structured. The monastery was, preeminently, a “school of the service of the Lord”.⁸³ The second difference lay in the fact that Eastern monasticism was very dependent on the state, due to the monastic legislation of Justinian. Western monasticism, by contrast, was far more independent of government interference.

At first glance, the monastic movement appears to be a most unlikely agent for mission. The communities were certainly not founded as launching pads for mission. They were not even created out of a desire to get involved in society in their immediate environment. Rather, they regarded society as corrupt and moribund, held together only by “the tenacity of custom”. Monasticism stood for the absolute renunciation of everything the ancient world had prized. It was “flight from the world, and nothing else”.⁸⁴ Monasticism’s one object, immediate as well as ultimate, “was to live in purity and die in peace”, and to avoid anything that could “agitate, harass, depress, stimulate, weary, or intoxicate the soul”.⁸⁵

In the light of the above it may therefore sound preposterous to suggest that monasticism was both a primary agent of medieval mission and the main instrument in reforming European society. That this was indeed what happened was due, first, to the esteem in which the general populace held monks.⁸⁶ Secondly, their exemplary lifestyle made a profound impact, particularly on the peasants. The monasteries became self-sustaining communities organised around rules for daily life, rules which pertained to work as well as prayer. This concept was revolutionary in the ancient world, where manual work was seen as fit for slaves. This concept would be emphasised again by Puritanism and have had a powerful effect on the western world.

Third, their monasteries were centers not only of hard manual labour, but also of culture and education. The monks were encouraged to become scholars. Thus, for the first time the practical

⁸³ BOSCH, *Ibid.*, p.372.

⁸⁴ BOSCH, *Ibid.*, p231.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ E.J. ELLISTON, *Christian Relief and Development*, Op. Cit., p. 7.

and theoretical were embodied in the same individuals. This combination helped create an atmosphere favourable to scientific development, including both workshops and libraries. The monasteries became centers of Christian faith, learning and technical progress as they expanded into northern Europe. According to Cannon, in the West the monasteries became “the highway of civilisation, itself”.⁸⁷

The contribution of monasticism to learning is well known, but its great effect on agricultural development has not been as widely recognised. Hannah writes that in the seventh century, it was the monks who possessed the:

skill, capital, organisation, and faith in the future to undertake large projects of reclamation over fields long desolated by the slave system of villa life... and the barbarian hordes....Some might have hesitated to sow crops whose fruit they might never see, but if all the founders of a monastery died others would take their place....Immense tracts of barren heath and water-soaked fen were by monasteries hands turned into excellent agricultural land.⁸⁸

It is interesting to note how the monks related their profound spirituality to an eminently practical lifestyle. They refused to write off the world as a lost cause or to propose neat, no-loose-ends answers to the problems of life, but rather to rebuild promptly, patiently and cheerfully, “as if were by some law of nature that the restoration came”.⁸⁹

Henry points out that the Benedictine Rule had been “one of the most effective linkages of justice, unity and the renewal the church has ever known”.⁹⁰ The Benedictine monastery indeed became a “school for the Lord’s service”, and was to have a profound influence in the centuries

⁸⁷ W. CANNON, *History of Christianity in the Middle Ages*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1960, p.16.

⁸⁸ IAN HANNAH, *Monasticism*, London: SCM Press, 1924, pp. 90-91.

⁸⁹ See BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, p.233.

⁹⁰ PATRICK HENRY, *Monastic Mission: The Monastic Tradition as Source for Unity and Renewal Today*, *The Ecumenical Review* vol. 39, pp. 271-281.

to follow. Cardinal Newman as quoted in Bosch captures the genius and lasting contribution of Benedictine monasticism in the following lengthy statement:

(St Benedict) found the world, physical, in ruins, and his mission was to restore it in the way, not of science, but of nature, not as if setting about to do it, not professing to do it by any set time or by any specific or by any series of strokes, but so quietly, patiently, gradually, that often, till the work was done, it was not known to be doing. It was a restoration, rather than a visitation, correction, or conversion. The new world he helped to create was a growth rather than a structure. Silent men were observed about the country, or discovered in the forest, digging, clearing, and building; and other silent men, not seen, were sitting in the cold cloister, tiring their eyes, and keeping their attention on the stretch, while they painfully deciphered and copied and re-copied the manuscripts which they had saved. There was no one that “contended, or cried out,” or drew attention to what was going on; but by degrees the wooded swamp became a hermitage, a religious house, a farm an abbey, a village, a seminary, a school of learning, and a city. Roads and bridges connected it with other abbeys and cities, which had similarly grown up; and what the haughty Alaric or the fierce Attila had broken to pieces, these patient meditative men had brought together and made to live again.⁹¹

The monastic movement, from its inception, has been concerned not only with the spiritual side of life, but also with its social and economic components. *Ora et Labora* was the motto of the Benedictine Order, and it also inspired many other communities. During the Middle Ages, the Church was deeply concerned about economic matters, not only on the theological level, but also on the operational one. Hospices, orphanages and philanthropic work were supported by income generated through economic activities. However, most of these were done through the monasteries. Julio De Santa Ana points out that it was the monasteries that chose to radically eradicate poverty.⁹² The monks saw as their gospel responsibility the need to be involved in the

⁹¹ BOSCH, Ibid., p.234.

⁹² “To put it simply, we might say that the plurality of responses means that there are at least two levels at which

transformation of society. They did not seem to demonstrate a contradiction between the task of evangelism and social transformation. Indeed, they were the two sides of one coin. They did not see evangelism as antithetical to human development and social transformation. Hence, one can see by this that the concept of development is not new to the Christian church. It has been and still is a necessary part of Christian life, experience and practice.

However, the concept of development adopted by the medieval church can be classified as that of the conservative paradigm, poverty is just there: "The poor you will always have with you". The relationship of rich and poor is a personal one of mutual rights and obligations, which are ordained by tradition. The responsibility of the rich towards the poor is to behave with fairness, forbearance and compassion. The responsibility of the poor is to accept their place in life humbly, being hardworking, law-abiding, loyal and grateful for the charity of the rich. In development, this is reflected in relief programmes to ease immediate hardship and in welfare approaches concerned with meeting 'basic needs'. More broadly, it is seen in institutions such as the 'poor relief' at the parish level. The provision of such support is often seen as an important part of the role of the Church.

3.3.3 The Reformation

The period of the Reformation saw the rise of mercantilism and then industrial capitalism. By 1300, before the reformation, there were many thriving cities and larger towns. The growth of towns and cities led to a growth of rural-urban specialisation. With urban workers severing all ties to the soil, the output of manufactured goods increased impressively. The expansion of trade,

the community of faith responds to the challenge of poverty: while some Christians live as ordinary believers and in one way or another come to compromise between the demands of faith and the styles of life around them, others attempt to give a more radical response, with no concessions to the context, thus trying to maintain the fundamental demands of faith. As a result, we have on the one hand "ordinary" Christians and, on the other, those who choose a monastic life; on the one hand, those who believe they could continue to have property and wealth, and on the other, those who abandon everything in their eagerness to be absolutely faithful to the demands of the Gospel." In DE SANTA ANA, *Good News to the Poor*, Geneva: WCC, 1977, p.62. For more concrete examples of how the monasteries attempted to eradicate poverty see Chapter 6 in the same reference mentioned above.

particularly long-distance trade in the early period, led to the establishment of commercial and industrial towns that serviced it. And the growth of these cities and towns, as well as their increased domination by merchant capitalists, led to important changes in both industry and agriculture.⁹³ Each of these areas of change, particularly the latter, brought about a weakening and ultimately a complete dissolving of the traditional ties that held together the feudal economic and social structure.

New systems of commercial law developed. Unlike the system of paternalistic adjudication based on custom and tradition that prevailed in the manor, the commercial law was fixed by precise code. The worker no longer sold a finished product to the merchant. Rather, the worker sold only the worker's own labour power. This led to the workers and their families becoming dependent on the merchant-capitalists. It was inevitable that such a relationship was in due course going to lead into serious conflict. England experienced a series of such revolts in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But the revolts that occurred in Germany in the early sixteenth century were probably the bloodiest of all.⁹⁴ The peasant rebellion in 1524-1525 was crushed by the imperial troops of the Holy Roman emperor, who slaughtered peasants by the tens of thousands.

The early sixteenth century is a watershed in European history. It marks the vague dividing line between the old, decaying feudal order and the rising capitalist system. After 1500, important social and economic changes began to occur with increasing frequency, each reinforcing the other and all together ushering in the system of capitalism.⁹⁵ In condemning greed, acquisitive behaviour, and the desire to accumulate wealth, the medieval Christian paternalist ethic condemned what had become the capitalist order's dominant motive force.⁹⁶ The capitalist market economy demanded self-seeking, acquisitive behaviour to function successfully. From the capitalists views of the nature of humans, and their needs to be free from the extensive economic

⁹³ E.K. HUNT & HOWARD J. SHERMAN, *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

restrictions that inhibited them in the conduct of their everyday business grew the philosophy of individualism that provided the basis of classical liberalism.

By now the church had become completely secularised. Under Henry VIII, the state in the form of God's monarchy assumed the role and function of the old universal church. As a result, the people could no longer look to the Catholic church for relief from widespread unemployment and poverty. Destruction of the power of the church had eliminated the organised system of charity. The state attempted to assume responsibility for the general welfare of society. All through this time the Christian paternalist view that promoted the general welfare of society still prevailed.

However, with the eventual emergence of industrial capitalism this paternalist view was no longer tenable. The capitalists wanted to be free not only from economic restrictions that encumbered manufacturing and commerce but also from the moral opprobrium the Catholic church had heaped upon their motives and activities. Unfortunately the rise of Protestantism was to provide this in-road. Protestantism not only freed them from religious condemnation but also eventually made virtues of the selfish, egoistic, and acquisitive motives the medieval church had so despised.⁹⁷ In doing so it provided the moral justification that the capitalists required for their stress on individualism, greed, self-acquisitiveness and profit making. The Reformers not only influenced their society but they were also influenced by the ideology (economic) of their time. Consequently, the absolute biblical concern for the poor as expressed by the early church was slowly diminishing, even though groups of Christians continued to campaign for the rights of the poor, it was small in comparison to the whole church. The church was ultimately taking sides with the rich as it provided theological justification for economic and political advancement and the creation of a 'better society'. It was not a 'better society' for the poor and marginalised. We shall examine this now.

It has often been pointed out that the Reformers were indifferent, if not hostile, to mission. Gustav Warneck, the father of missiology as a theological discipline, was one of the first

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp.31-33.

Protestant scholars who promoted this view.⁹⁸ “We miss in the Reformers not only missionary action,” he said, “but even the idea of missions, in the sense in which we understand them today”. More recently, however, several scholars have argued that a judgement such as Warneck’s implies summonising the Reformers before the tribunal of the modern missionary movement and finding them guilty for not having subscribed to a definition of mission which did not exist in their own time. To argue that the Reformers had no missionary vision, these scholars contend, is to misunderstand the basic thrust of their theology and ministry.⁹⁹

Luther, in particular, is to be regarded as “creative and original thinker”. In fact, he provided the church’s missionary enterprise with clear and important guidelines and principles. The starting point of the Reformers’ theology was not what people could or should do for the salvation of the world, but what God has already done in Christ. God’s righteousness did not mean God’s righteous punishment and wrath, but his gift of grace and mercy, which the individual may appropriate in faith.¹⁰⁰ If the “missionary text” of the Greek patristic period was John 3:16 and that of medieval Catholicism Luke 14:23, then one may perhaps claim that Romans 1:16f is the “missionary text” of the Protestant theological paradigm in all its many forms.¹⁰¹ With the Reformation came a fundamental theological shift in the understanding of the church’s involvement in society, especially in relation to the poor. As Lindberg points out:

Luther’s theological position consists essentially of the conviction that Salvation is not the process or goal of life, but rather its presupposition ... Since righteousness before God is by faith alone and salvation is the source rather than the goal of life, it becomes difficult to rationalise the plight of the poor as a peculiar form of blessedness. There is no salvific value in being poor or in giving alms. Thus when the Reformers turned to the reform of poor relief and social policy, they had a new theological foundation for their work... They de-ideologised the medieval approach to the poor which had obscured the

⁹⁸ GUSTAV WARNECK, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, London: SCM Press, 1906, p.9.

⁹⁹ BOSCH, *Ibid.*, p.244.

¹⁰⁰ See WALKER, *Op. Cit.* pp.304-311., also K. S. LATOURETTE, *Ibid.*, pp.703-742.

¹⁰¹ BOSCH, *Transforming Missions*, *Ibid.*, p.246.

problem of poverty.¹⁰²

The new theological emphasis on individual faith contributed to the growing influence of the new individualistic philosophy. The basic tenet of Protestantism, which laid the groundwork for religious attitudes that were to sanction middle-class business practices, was the doctrine that human beings were justified by faith rather than by works. The Catholic Church had taught that faith and works, which generally meant ceremonies and rituals, justified humans.¹⁰³ Justification by works did not mean that an individual could save himself: it meant that he could be saved through the Church. Hence the power of the clergy, compulsory confession, the imposition of penance on the whole population gave the priest a terrifying power.¹⁰⁴ These powers ensured that the medieval doctrines of the Catholic church were not easily abandoned and that individuals were subordinated to society. The sense of community and obligation to serve the poor were deeply entrenched and maintained.

The Protestant doctrine of justification by faith asserted that motives were more important than specific acts or rituals. Each person had to search his or her own heart to discover if acts stemmed from a pure heart and faith in God. This individualistic reliance on each person's private conscience appealed strongly to the new middle-class artisans and small merchants. Such people felt quite genuinely and strongly that their economic practices, though they might conflict with the traditional law of the old church, were not offensive to God. On the contrary: they glorified God. The new doctrines stressed the necessity of doing well at one's earthly calling as the best way to please God, and emphasised diligence and hard work. These doctrines subsequently led to the spiritualising of economic processes and the belief that "God instituted the market and exchange."¹⁰⁵ This emphasis, however, sadly took the Christian focus away from the general concern for the community and the obligation to the poor. It gave acceptance to the liberal paradigm: poverty as backwardness. It said that those who are poor or 'backward' should

¹⁰² Quoted in R. SIDER, *Evangelicals and Development*, Ibid., p.20.

¹⁰³ It is important to note that this is a highly questionable claim that is usually attributed to Protestant bias.

¹⁰⁴ The previous footnote fits here as well.

¹⁰⁵ HUNT & SHERMAN, Ibid.

not be controlled, but enabled to reach their full potential. Poverty is the result not of the natural order, but of incomplete development. As this suggests, the liberal world-view is historically intertwined with modernity.

Luther's theological position, however, was to influence his care and concern for the poor. The result was the formulation of new social policies to deal with major economic and social change. Luther and his colleague Karlstadt made provision in Wittenberg for the city council to provide low-interest loans for workers; subsidies for education and training for the children of the poor; taxes to support the poor- all designed to prevent as well as alleviate poverty.¹⁰⁶ In five years they changed the theory and practice of poor relief which had been established by centuries of ecclesiastical tradition. They were convinced that fundamental human rights of equality, freedom, and brotherly love had their source in the Christian faith. However, Luther also believed that this task of social change was essentially a task for the secular ruler and kingdom to carry out. This was the birth of the two "kingdoms" theory. Luther introduced two authorities (i.e. "kingdoms"): *spiritual* and *civil* justice and order. Both are ordained by God as forces to combat the empire of Satan. Christians are subject to both authorities; first, however, to the spiritual authority and because they are subject to both authorities, Christians cannot live exclusively in either the spiritual "kingdom" or the civil "kingdom".¹⁰⁷ This theory helped to strengthen the separation of state and church.

John Calvin's theology was one which took the believer's responsibility in the world more seriously than Luther. For Calvin, the Christ who was exalted to God's right hand was preeminently the active Christ. In a sense, Calvin subscribed to an eschatology in the process of being fulfilled. He used the term *regnum Christi* (the reign of Christ) in this respect, viewing the church as intermediary between the exalted Christ and the secular order. Such a theological point of departure could not but give rise to the idea of mission as "extending the reign of Christ", both

¹⁰⁶ RONALD SIDER, *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁰⁷ See HANS FLORIN, *Lutherans in South Africa*; Durban: Lutheran Publishing Co., 1967, p.74. This view has been recently contested.

by the inward spiritual renewal of individuals and by transforming the face of the earth through filling it with “the knowledge of the Lord”. This particular view led Calvin into bringing about social transformation in Geneva.¹⁰⁸ He believed that the best possible way to transform society was to make it a truly Christian community. It is interesting to note how he linked his religious views with the transformation of society. He believed that his own time was caught up in a spiritual and moral crisis whose resolution required his own ardent efforts. To set the world right was what he was most insistently ‘called’ to do; “God sends prophets and teachers,” he proclaimed, “to bring the world to order”.¹⁰⁹ This is what he attempted to do in Geneva.

Calvin’s program for dealing with the problems of his own age was based on his conception of God as “*legislateur et roy*” of the universe. It was crucial for him “that God governs us.”¹¹⁰ “When our Lord Jesus Christ appeared,” Calvin declared, “he acquired possession of the whole world; and his kingdom was extended from one end of it to another, especially with the proclamation of the Gospel ... God has consecrated the entire earth through the precious blood of his Son to the end that we may inhabit it and live under his reign”.¹¹¹ This meant that religious reform pointed also the reform of the secular realm. Calvin added that believers “truly worship God by the righteousness they maintain within their society.” For those acquainted only with the characteristic theological face of Calvin, it must be noted that Calvin’s theological thinking, like all great classic theologians, was deeply involved with the structures and realities of everyday life. W.F. Graham observes that:

For Calvin the world was to be taken seriously, and for him the real world involved shoemakers, printers, and clockmakers, as well as farmers, scholars, knights, and clergymen. Calvin’s world- affirming theology is quite apparent.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ See D.K. McKIM, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984, p.175.

¹⁰⁹ W.J. BOUWSMA, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, New York, 1988, p.191.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹¹¹ Sermon No. 45 on Deut., 426-427.

¹¹² W. F. GRAHAM, *The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact*, Richmond: John Knox, 1971, p.91.

It must be made clear, however, that even though Calvin argued for Christian involvement in the world he maintained a clear position about the world to come. Christians are called to meditate on the world to come while living in the tensions of this world. Calvin urges us to adopt the fundamental attitude of *contemptio mundi*.¹¹³ “Whatever kind of tribulation presses upon us, we must ever look to this end: to accustom ourselves to contempt for the present life and to be aroused thereby to meditate upon the future life.” The present life is full of vanities and allurements. “Stunned by the empty dazzlement of riches, power, and honors, [our minds] become so deadened that they see no farther. The heart also, occupied with avarice, ambition, and lust, is so weighed down that it cannot rise up higher.” Yet God calls us “not to be captivated by such panderings”, but to come away from a “perverse love of this life” to a “desire for a better one”.¹¹⁴ This is the eternal life which God sets before us; He rescues us from “this boundless abyss of all evils and miseries” and leads us into “that blessed inheritance of his life and glory.” Thus the Christian life “strains towards a completion and fulfillment that belong to it only beyond death.”¹¹⁵

Calvin speaks in the strongest possible terms about total renunciation of this world: “Indeed, there is no middle ground between these two: either the world must become worthless to us or hold us bound by intemperate love of it” (3.9.2)¹¹⁶. Further, “if the earthly life be compared with the heavenly, it is doubtless to be at once despised and trampled under foot” (3.9.4). Yet Calvin goes on to qualify this by explaining that the earthly life “is never to be hated except in so far as it holds us subject to sin; although not even hatred of that condition may ever properly be turned against life itself” (3.9.4). For “this life, however crammed with infinite miseries it may be, is still rightly to be counted among those blessings of God which are not to be spurned” (3.9.3).

¹¹³ DONALD K. McKIM, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984, p.305.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Calvin's reasons for advocating contempt for the present life are not rooted primarily in a body-soul dichotomy, but are to be found in a contrast between the present life under the cross and the future life of the heavenly kingdom.

What Calvin is advocating here is that Christians be fully involved in the present world- they should accept God's good gifts with thankfulness and be active in all spheres of human endeavour- yet manifest an outlook oriented primarily toward the future:

We must remember to distinguish between the blessings of the present and those of the future. For in this world God blesses us in such a way as to give us a mere foretaste of His kindness, and by that taste to entice us to desire heavenly blessings with which we may be satisfied. That is why the blessings of this present life are not only mixed but almost destroyed here lest we should gain to luxuriate in it.”¹¹⁷

In this sense the Christian stance which Calvin urges is a *via media*. Christians are to live midway between the “brutish love of this world” (3.9.1) characteristic of the sinful self and the final perfection and blessedness which the saints will achieve in the “kingdom of God” (3.9.6). What separates godly people from the worldly is “their opposite attitudes to this present world and beyond.”

With this view in mind Calvin attempted to transform the society of his day. It was an endeavour to create a better world in which everyone could live with justice, righteousness and peace. By and large, we know from Calvin's preaching that he tried to reform Geneva from the pulpit and state policies. Whereas medieval society was largely one where common men were non-participants, “Calvinism taught previously passive men (sic) the styles and methods of political activity and enabled them successfully to claim the right of participation in that on-going system of political action that is the modern state.”¹¹⁸ Here again is evident a responsibility for society fostered by the Calvinist insistence that the will of God must extend to the total community.

Like Luther, Calvin expressed a particular concern for the poor. He pointed out that the poor, in fact, serve a positive function in God's overall scheme of things. As His *procureurs* or *receveurs*,

¹¹⁷ THOMAS F. TORRANCE, *Kingdom and Church*, Fair Lawn, N. J.: Essential Books, 1956, p.121.

¹¹⁸ W. FRED. GRAHAM, *The Constructive Revolutionary*, Ibid., p.60.

they serve as a type of barometer of the faith and charity of the Christian community. “God sends us the poor as his receivers. And although the alms are given to mortal creatures, yet God accepts and approves them and puts them to one’s account, as if we had placed in his hands that which we give to the poor.”¹¹⁹ For this reason he severely criticised, “the apparently liberal, who yet do not feel for the miseries of their brothers.”¹²⁰ Calvin did not oppose wealth as such; he, however, was concerned that God’s gifts be used for the relief of the whole community of God’s people. Indeed, if there is any central theme in Calvin’s social and economic thought, it is that wealth comes from God in order to be used to aid our brethren. The solidarity of the human community is such that it is inexcusable for some to have plenty and others to be in need.¹²¹ Calvin brought this message home in one of his sermons:

Let those, then, that have riches, whether they have been left by inheritance, or procured by industry and efforts, consider that their abundance was not intended to be laid out in intemperance or excess, but in relieving the necessities of the brethren.¹²²

Calvin considered poverty a serious problem. He believed that it was the Christian’s responsibility to address this issue. Calvin and his pastors lived in conditions close to poverty, raising funds for the needy and lobbying the state to act for the poor. He employed the traditional organic metaphor for society (as found in Acts 2: 42ff), in which, as he wrote, no member has “power for itself nor applies it to its own private use, but each pours it out to the fellow members”; what chiefly matters is “the common advantage of the whole body.”¹²³ Occasionally he identified this community with the whole human race. “All people,” he could maintain, “are bound together as a sacred chain...[which]... should be embraced in one feeling of love.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Sermon 95 on Deut. 15: 11-15 (CO 27.338). This translation is found in GRAHAM, *Constructive Revolutionary*, p.69.

¹²⁰ Commentary on 1John 3:17 (CNTC 12.277).

¹²¹ GRAHAM, *Constructive Revolutionary*, p.68.

¹²² *Opera*, 50, 101-102. *Commentarius in Epistolam Secundam ad Corinthios*, 2 Cor. 8:15. Quoted in GRAHAM, *Constructive Revolution*, p.68

¹²³ *Inst.*, III, vii, 5.

¹²⁴ *Commentary Acts 13:36; Inst.*, II, viii, 55.

This particular view generally yielded, for him, to a more practical view of community based on neighbourhood. "All the blessings we enjoy," he proclaimed, "have been entrusted to us by the Lord on this condition, that they should be dispensed for the good of our neighbors."¹²⁵ What we see here in Calvin's teachings is that we have moral responsibility as individuals, to act with personal integrity and show love towards one another. But we also have a collective responsibility for the society in which we live. We cannot act justly as individuals, if structures within which we live are unjust. The vision of Christianity then is a corporate vision.

In Calvin's view money and goods ought to circulate in human society to the welfare of all. Humanity in solidarity one with another would participate in contributing according to one's vocation to the good of all. He maintained that the church teaches and acts to promote equality and restore human solidarity. It helps people to put their property to use of all. Calvin saw the governing authorities as the agents of God for the welfare of the people. He thus condemned the rich and powerful who exploited their material edge to increase the poverty of the poor. He insisted on personal morality, righteousness and hard work. He seriously attacked the lazy who did not contribute towards a working society. His stress on hard labour led to a distorted view that linked hard labour with salvation. However, Calvin certainly did not intend this. He rather assumes hard work, but he wanted it clearly understood that hard labour did not give wealth. Only God provides wealth. No one will be advanced unless God advances him or her. Calvin's stress on hard labour was to be taken and used by the capitalists to justify their personal ego, greed and selfish-acquisitiveness.¹²⁶ Preston points out, "Calvinism did crystallise its ethic round the new commercial society, and in a more confused way Catholic moral theologians were to follow."¹²⁷ Tawney rightly points out that in an age of impersonal finance, world markets and capitalist organisations, the church tried to moralise economic relations by treating every transaction as a law of personal conduct.¹²⁸ This is to say that in its individualism it failed to

¹²⁵ *Inst.*, III, vii, 5.

¹²⁶ See, for example, the work of MAX WEBER, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), ET Allen & Unwin and Scribner's, 1930.

¹²⁷ R.H. PRESTON, *Religion And The Persistence Of Capitalism*, London: SCM Press, 1979, p. 91.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.92.

comprehend the new structures of economic life and the power relations that went with them. Traditional Christian thought on social issues became increasingly irrelevant, and in the end capitulated uncritically to the *laissez-faire* view of the state and the economic order. The latter, however, was not intended. This view is supported by an examination of Calvin's interest in the welfare of the poor.

Calvin's concern for the poor resulted in his attempt to transform his society, especially in Geneva. He concerned himself with the issues of commerce and economic justice. His theology was not disembodied, divorced from the realities of life where labourers and employers are often at odds over economic matters. Calvin realised that because of the nature of humanity and the sinfulness all of our institutions, our endeavours are to some extent motivated by self-interest, pride, and greed. Yet his is a "world-affirming theology" in the sense that he sought to apply the gospel to all of life. For him, that meant seeking the guidance of scripture for the problems besetting humanity, particularly those besetting the citizens of Geneva. Thus Calvin as a theologian and pastor became involved in everyday matters as diverse as the high cost of dying, hospitals, sumptuary laws, and the regulation of business and industry and the question of wages. Calvin and Farel instituted the first free public education for both sexes. Beyond the welfare system and education the work of Calvin and the pastors reached out to suggestions for railings to protect children on stairs and balconies. Fires and chimneys were regulated and efforts were made to clean the town and for street repair. Regulation of prices for the necessities of life was an accepted principle of the early reformation in Geneva. Some today may not agree with or approve of Calvin's stands, but they must admit that he regarded no area as too secular to be of legitimate Christian concern.¹²⁹

The Reformers generally advocated an involvement with the world. However, unlike the Middle Ages, they went a step further to attempt to transform society. Their theology in many ways encouraged community development.¹³⁰ And this they engaged as they influenced social and

¹²⁹ D. K. McKim, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, Op. Cit., p.301.

¹³⁰ We see community development as a method of *development*.

economic policies of the government of the day.¹³¹ Whilst bearing in mind a picture of the “world to come” in God’s kingdom, they very much engaged in the “this world”. However, though this may have been the prevalent view of the time it was by no means the only view. The Anabaptists movement, for example, took a completely different perspective.

Driven by the missionary “mandate” of the “Great Commission” in Matthew 28, they severely criticised the Reformers for their involvement with the state. The Anabaptists insisted on absolute separation between church and state and on non-participation in the activities of government. Needless to say, they separated themselves from the this world as they focused on God’s world. This naturally meant that church and state could under no circumstance whatsoever cooperate in mission. The Reformers, on the other hand, could not conceive of a missionary outreach into countries in which there was no Protestant (Lutheran, Reformed, etc.) government. As a result, the next period, which is the birth of the modern era, saw the simultaneous expansion of the western nations in colonialism, and the beginning of the world-wide expansion of the church through the modern western Protestant missionary movement. We now turn our attention to the church in the modern world.

3.3.4 The Modern Church

The contributions of the Reformers continued to influence the social, political and economic aspects of a new developing world. However, the Enlightenment was to have a huge impact on the Christian church.¹³² For one, the *church* was gradually eliminated as a factor for validating the structure of society. With all the “supernatural” sanctions (God, church, and royalty) disappearing, people now began to look to the subhuman level of existence, to animals, plants, and objects, to find authentication and validation for life. Humanity derived its existence and validity from “below” and no longer from “above”¹³³ From this it was clear that the “secular”

¹³¹ ROBERT L. STIVERS, *Reformed Faith and Economics*, USA: University Press of America, 1989, pp.33-48.

¹³² See DAVID BOSCH’S excellent chapter on the impact of the Enlightenment on Christian mission in *Transforming Mission*, pp.262f.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

and the “religious” were going their separate ways, even if it would still take a long time before the full implications of the new situation would manifest itself.

This new focus was to influence economic activity and industrial development. The estrangement of religious and moral views in economic development led to the exploitation and abuse of women and children in particular. Children were bound to factories by indentures of apprenticeship for seven years, or until they were 21.¹³⁴ They endured the cruelest servitude, often working from 14 to 18 hours a day with hardly more than 20 minutes a day for their main meal. Women were mistreated almost as badly. Women in the mines toiled 14 to 16 hours a day, stripped naked to the waist, working with men and doing the work of men.¹³⁵ And many times the price of factory employment was submission to the sexual advances of employers and foremen.¹³⁶

Secondly, The Enlightenment was the Age of *Reason*. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the old attitudes of fear and reverence towards the unknown were no longer appropriate. Tradition was rejected as the basis of authority. Both natural and social worlds could be understood rationally, and explored empirically. Physical, social and political problems were puzzles that could be solved, and human inventiveness was quite adequate to the task. During this period the respect for science and human reason replaced the Christian faith as the cornerstone of Western culture.¹³⁷ Many Protestants met this crisis of faith, not by arguments, but by the experience of supernatural conversion. And many Christians came to see that state support was no longer essential for Christianity’s survival.

This period also emphasised the operation of a *subject-object scheme* that placed value on science. This separated humans from their environment and enabled them to examine the animal and mineral world from the vantage-point of scientific objectivity. Whilst this may have had its

¹³⁴ HUNT & SHERMAN, Op. cit., p.52.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ BRUCE L. SHELLEY, *Church History in Plain Language*, Dallas: Word Publishing, 1982, p.374f.

advantages in terms of the increase of knowledge, yet it eventually led to the fact that humans pose a threat to the environment. Such could be seen in the economic policies that propagated profit making.

Thirdly, The Enlightenment gave rise to the belief in *progress* which was to later influence the “development programs” western nations were undertaking in the countries of the so-called Third World. The general idea here was that the western technological development model, primarily expressed in categories of material possession, consumerism, and economic advance, could have a trickle down effect to the poorest of the poor.¹³⁸ This particular ideology was to subsequently impact the mission of the church. For example, during the first century of Protestant history, motivated by the idea of progress, the Protestant mission undertook the evangelisation of the world. Whether their intentions were motivated by commerce or Christianity remains highly questionable. However, a wide variety of humanitarian ministries accompanied the widespread preaching of the gospel.

The idea of progress also influenced the goal of mission during the nineteenth century. For example, this can be seen in the work of Henry Venn who proposed that the goal of mission should be “the building up of self-governing, self- supporting and self-extending units of the church universal.”¹³⁹ Whilst his intentions may have been good he was, nevertheless, influenced by the theory of modernisation. The following statement by Venn illustrates this fact:

Regarding the ultimate object of a Mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical result, to be the settlement of a Native Church under Native Pastors upon a self-supporting system, it should be borne in mind that the progress of a Mission depends upon the training up and the location of Native Pastors; and that, as it has been happily expressed, the ‘euthanasia of a Mission’ takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well-trained Native

¹³⁸ Numerous writers have shown the flaws of this theory of development. This model was usually influenced by the ideal of *modernism*.

¹³⁹ J. VERKUYL, *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

congregations under Native Pastors' is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves, till it insensibly ceases; and so the Mission passes into a settled Christian community. Then the Missionary and all Missionary agencies should be transferred to the 'regions beyond.'¹⁴⁰

This system eventually gave rise to the domination, exploitation and suppression of the 'younger' churches, usually controlled by the financial "purse". We see in this all the flaws associated with the theory of modernisation, which we examined in Chapter Two.

The mission philosophy of the contemporary church has awakened to the stark realities of poverty and injustices in the new world. "Western Theology" is no longer accepted on face value in non-Western churches or countries. Whilst Christian mission from the influence of the West has made accomplishments in many areas, yet there has been certain failures. Dennis Smith summarises some of the accomplishments in this regard:

The missionary movement made a prime contribution to the abolition of slavery; spread better methods of agriculture; established and maintained unnumbered schools; gave medical care to millions; elevated the status of women; created bonds between people of different countries, which war could not sever; trained a significant segment of the leadership of the nations now newly independent.¹⁴¹

However, we observe that with these contributions came an imposition of Western culture and political economics. The missionaries seemed to have had a total absence of any ability to be critical about their own culture or to appreciate foreign cultures. Bosch expresses this well by pointing out that the advocates of mission were blind to their own ethnocentrism. They confused

¹⁴⁰ MAX WARREN, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, p. 28.

¹⁴¹ E. SMITH, *Mandate for Mission*, New York: Friendship Press, 1978, p.71.

their middle-class ideals and values with the tenets of Christianity. Their views about morality, respectability, order, efficiency, individualism, professionalism, work, and technological progress, having been baptised long before, were without compunction exported to the ends of the earth.¹⁴² They refused to take seriously the culture, language, traditions and community life of the non-Western world. The Western missionary enterprise of the period under discussion proceeded not only from the assumption of the superiority of Western culture over all other cultures, but also from the conviction that God, in his providence, had chosen the Western nations, because of their unique qualities, to be the standard-bearers of his cause even to the uttermost ends of the world.¹⁴³ Samuel Worcester, in 1816, described the objectives of the American Board with respect to American Indians as making “the whole tribe English in their language, civilised in their habits, and Christian in their religion.”¹⁴⁴ In similar fashion, Julius Richter, the German historian of missions, writing in 1927, viewed “Protestant missions as an integral part of the cultural expansion of Euro-American peoples”.¹⁴⁵ The Christian mission became synonymous with Western cultural and colonial expansion. Therefore, since the sixteenth century, if one said “mission”, one in a sense also said “colonialism”. Modern missions originated in the context of modern Western colonialism.¹⁴⁶ Hence the word “development” has not found favour with the Third World.¹⁴⁷

Andre Bieler establishes that the industrial revolution provided the basis for what he describes as “runaway development”.¹⁴⁸ He states that the majority of Christian churches and sects, and their theologians shared in promoting the establishment of industrial societies for good or ill by not

¹⁴² BOSCH, *Transformation Mission*, p.294.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ HUTCHINSON, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Missionary Thought and Foreign Missions*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, pp. 15,29,65.

¹⁴⁵ SPINDLER quoted in BOSCH, Ibid., p.292.

¹⁴⁶ RUTTI quoted in BOSCH, Ibid., p. 303.

¹⁴⁷ See S. NEILL’S account of this in *Call to Mission*, Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1970.

¹⁴⁸ No revolution has so radically and permanently transformed the social order, habits, morals, mentalities and economic and political structures of all human societies as the industrial and technological revolution. For two centuries, that revolution has been inspired by the two types of subversive capitalism operative in the world, private capitalism and state capitalism.

understanding and therefore not controlling, except in very limited way, the forms it took.¹⁴⁹

Bieler points out:

These Christians and these theologians were unaware, and sometimes still pretend to be unaware that they have actively contributed, both by their own individual daily political, economic and commercial activities and by their ignorance of the collective effects of these activities, in promoting more and more intensely an ill-considered and irresponsible development under cover of the alleged neutrality of their spiritual and church life.¹⁵⁰

These Christian churches and theologians thus contributed a *sacred character* to the ideologies of the Industrial Revolution. However, noticeable was a minority of believers forming what the majority has called the Christian social movement who initiated a close investigation into the human sufferings caused by the subversive process of industrialisation.

What was the church's response to all this? As we examine this response we shall observe the churches movement from *charity* to the concept of *development*. Bieler outlines four stages and in each of these he shows how the minority of (social) Christians addressed human suffering, especially brought about by proletarianisation.¹⁵¹

3.3.4.1 *First stage in growth of awareness: charitable work*

This perspective recognises that Christians and Christian churches in part, did not stand apathetic to the sufferings of the poor. Bieler noted that it was a human condition to which the churches

¹⁴⁹ ANDRE BIELER, Gradual Awareness of Social, Economic Problems (1750-1900), in JULIO DE SANTA ANA (edit.), *Separation Without Hope: The Church and the Poor During the Industrial Revolution and Colonial Expansion*, New York: Orbis Books, 1980, p.6.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ "The phenomenon of proletarianisation" writes Max Pietsch, "is characterised by a dangerous sociological and anthropological situation in which man (sic) is stripped of property, deprived in every respect of resources to fall back on, detached from family and neighbourhood ties. He falls into a state of economic dependence, is torn from his roots, militarised in his work, estranged from nature and mechanised in his daily activities. In short, the characteristic feature of proletarianisation is human devitalisation and depersonalisation." Ibid., p. 10.

and individual Christians actively responded from the very dawn of the industrial revolution by doing works of charity.¹⁵² De Santa Anna also concluded that it comprised at best a relationship with the poor that went deeper than “a paternalism inspired by pity.”¹⁵³ Charity, or social service, as C. I. Itty indicated in his systematic exposition of the churches’ involvement in Asian society, comprised a substantial range of categories: education, health services, social welfare, and some sort of economic development.¹⁵⁴ It follows then that charity viewed by the Christian social movement was seen as much more than mere *aid* to the poor. For most Christians sensitive to the sufferings of their time, these charitable activities continued to be the “principle remedy for the pauperisation and proletarianisation of the industrial centres”.¹⁵⁵

We see in this a *notion of development*. However, this notion must not be taken too far, for as Bieler reminds us: “they (the Christians sensitive to human suffering) hardly attempted at all to seek out either the origins of the social evil whose ravages they perceived, or the means of correcting it. This was the period of so-called paternalist charitable institutions; which for their time were in fact great enterprises.”¹⁵⁶

3.3.4.2 *Second stage of awareness: recognition of the need for state legislative intervention*

In responding to the social evils arising from industrialisation, many Christians were content with direct charitable work, when undertaken seriously with faith, mobilised a great deal of effort, energy, time and money of an active minority. However, there were those who realised that action of this kind has its limitations for it fails to deal with the causes of human need. Daniel Legrand, for example, influenced by the evangelical revival of the early 19th century, and aware of the unfortunate lot of his workmen whom he was trying to help, used his influence to effect

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ JULIO DE SANTA ANA, Ibid., p.175.

¹⁵⁴ C. I. ITTY, The Church and the Poor in Asian History, in JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Separation Without Hope*, Op.cit., p. 137-153.

¹⁵⁵ ANDRE BIELER, *ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. In this section Bieler also provides examples of the Christian churches’ works of charity in France,

social changes in the laws of France, protecting the employment rights of women and children in particular.¹⁵⁷

Bieler indicates that there were other Christians who were at work from the very dawn of the industrial era, trying to go beyond individual action and to act on society as a whole by giving Christian love a political dimension.¹⁵⁸ A notable example in this respect is William Wilberforce whose anti-slavery movement impacted the passing of the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833.¹⁵⁹

It can be seen from this that the work of a minority of Christians or philanthropic industrialists helped improve the living conditions of the workers. Nevertheless, as Bieler points out: “although legislation contributed to some extent to modify the social position of the workers, this brought no progress in knowledge of the socio-economic mechanisms of industrial society or in the understanding necessary for its transformation”.¹⁶⁰

3.3.4.3 *Third stage of awareness: studies, publications, inquires and associations for social progress*

The Industrial Revolution greatly increased the wealth of humankind, but it brought a host of evils for the workers massed together in the ever expanding factories of European and American cities. It led to the exploitation and abuse of the workers. The old class conflict between the aristocrats and the middle class that had raged in Western Europe during the early years of the nineteenth century had ended in the triumph of the bourgeoisie. With their victory had come an economic philosophy called *laissez faire* which basically said that every individual should be left alone to pursue his own interest: then everything was supposed to work out for the happiness of the greatest number. In this economic system, the deserving rich appear as the ‘wealth creators’.

England and Germany.

¹⁵⁷ See JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Ibid.*, pp.13-14.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p.15.

Just as the poor receive blame as individuals for their poverty, so the rich receive praise as individuals for their wealth.

The most unfortunate fact in the rise of political liberalism was the special favour it enjoyed from the Protestant puritan ethic and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The myth of liberalism continued to retain its hold on many secularised minds, just as the old theological notion of Providence still dominated conservative Christian consciences. Both led them to believe that invisible powers harmoniously regulated economic life as they did nature, and that it was not humankind's place to intervene deliberately and responsibly to change their course.¹⁶¹ And so as Nicolai Zabolotsky indicates, referring to Russia in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Christian church saw itself as having a different primary task, which was one of a particular *spiritual* kind:¹⁶²

But the Church, let us repeat, did not possess its own explicitly formulated programme of political and socio-economic reconstruction of life in Russia; above all, it refrained from that kind of activity, not without reason, believing that precisely as Church it has a much more important field of responsibility.

First and foremost, the church's responsibility consisted (in its actual coexistence with the state) in maintaining its own proper identity as an institute of salvation in the proclamation of the Gospel, that is, in its internal and external mission, in the moral education of the faithful, in the celebration of the liturgy, the sacraments and rites of the Church, in pastoral care of souls.¹⁶³

If this statement is anything to go by, it suggests that the theological views in these centuries were inadequate to deal with the socio-economic and political issues of the day, particularly as they pertained to the suffering and exploitation of the *poor*. Bieler mentions a few of the social

¹⁶¹ A. BIELER, *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶² NICOLAI A. ZABOLOTSKY, *The Russian Orthodox Church and the Poor in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, in *Separation Without Hope*, *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁶³ It is important to note that these views are still held in our present day.

reformers who attempted to relate their theological views with the socio-economic life as it related to the poor, pointing out that they were met with little success because: "the characteristic feature of these associations and publications was that, with few rare exceptions, they concerned only a limited number of representatives of the two ruling classes, the old aristocracy and the new middle class."¹⁶⁴ However, two essential thoughts emerged: (1) Christianity is the spiritual force capable of transforming society so as to undo the ravages of liberal capitalism, and (2) the Bible constitutes the charter of any society that wishes to take its inspiration from Christ and which therefore must make the lot of the *poorest its primary concern*. It follows that a relationship of mutual enforcement between the social activity of charity (praxis) and the prevailing theological discourse (theory) was starting to emerge among the minority Christian churches. But this did not go far because the conscious minority was opposed by a conservative majority that had little wish for real changes in society.

The early attack upon the capitalist's *laissez-faire* philosophy came from a new concept called socialism. It was mostly a theory that condemned the concentration of wealth and called for public or worker ownership of business. Above all, the socialist insisted that harmony and cooperation - not ruthless competition - should control economic affairs. In essence this was a movement back to the early church's socialist tradition, even though Karl Marx was to repudiate Christianity and morality.

As in the slavery controversy Christian movements fell on all sides of the social crisis. Many church members were capitalists. They owned factories and had several influential positions in society. Many were thus eager to defend the *laissez faire* philosophy. After the middle of the nineteenth century, however, an increasing number of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, worked zealously for improved conditions for labourers. Four lines of action were open to them:¹⁶⁵ 1. They could challenge the *laissez faire* philosophy in the name of Christian principles. 2. They could establish Christian institutions to relieve the suffering of the poor and powerless.

¹⁶⁴ A. BIELER, *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹⁶⁵ BRUCE L. SHELLEY, *Op. Cit.*, p.430.

3. They could support the formation of labour unions. 4. They could appeal to the state for legislation aimed at the improvement of working conditions.

The social crisis had a serious impact on the mission of the church. This can be seen, for example, in the emergence of the Social Gospel movement in the United States. The crux of the Social Gospel was the belief that God's saving work included corporate structures as well as personal lives. If it is true that social good and evil are collective in nature, not simply the total of good and evil individuals, then Christians are obliged to work for the *reconstruction* of the social order. It is part of their social responsibility.

The prime example of sin in society, according to the preachers of the Social Gospel, was the capitalist system. Salvation, they said, was impossible as long as that system remained unchanged. Although they differed among themselves as to how they may regenerate the system, they all agreed that the "kingdom of God" could not come without it.

3.3.4.4 *Fourth stage of awareness: the emancipation of the working classes and the class war*

The industrial age saw a number of dramatic clashes as the working class strove to better their living conditions and struggle for their rights as humans.¹⁶⁶ We have already shown above that throughout the course of the development of industrial capitalism in the West, many Christians were actively proclaiming its harmful effects and attempting to alter its course. However, in total composition they constituted only a minority in the Christian church.¹⁶⁷ The result was that the

¹⁶⁶ Bieler points out that in this struggle the working classes had to wage an unequal fight to obtain successively:

- (a) an improvement in working conditions
- (b) liberty of association, the right to combination and the right to strike
- (c) the right to vote and to be eligible for election, and
- (d) a new status in industrial society

¹⁶⁷ In this regard we can refer to at least two of the Christian minority groups: (1) the Catholic group of French Christian socialists in the 19th century, and (2) the Protestant Christian socialists in England. See BIELER, *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

reforms they proposed did not bring about the transformation of the structures of capitalist industrial society. The vast majority of Christians joined with the middle classes and the old society in resisting the emancipation of the proletariat. Their indifference and theological conservatism led them to confer a sacred character on the old social and political structures and to reinforce in Christians a defence mechanism against the advance of political democracy and working-class betterment.

In the light of the above it can hardly be claimed that the Christian church was involved in development – the attempt to help people to be more human. It took sides with the middle-class rather than with the poor (working class). It (even) used its conservative theological views to resist change in society. However, it is when we focus our attention on the minority of Christian social groups in these centuries that the *notion* of development can be observed. This we have already seen in the changing dimensions to the concept of Christian charity. It was not until the ecumenical renewal of the first half of the 20th century that the concept of development was fully embraced by the ecumenical church. We shall now undertake a brief examination of the work of the ecumenical movement in the light of understanding its impact on the church's involvement in development.

3.4 THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The renewed ecumenical movement not only embraced the concept of development but also made significant critical contributions to it(s) growing understanding.¹⁶⁸ Richard Dickinson in offering an ecumenical self-appreciation¹⁶⁹ points this out:¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ The World Council of Churches' (WCC) World Conference on Church and Society at Geneva in 1966 has been indicated as the actual landmark of a theological and ecclesiastical development concern.

¹⁶⁹ Richard Dickinson is one of the chief contributors to the thinking of the ecumenical movement on development. Among other things, he was secretary for specialised assistance for social projects in the World Council of Churches.

¹⁷⁰ R. D. N. DICKINSON, Development, in N. LOSSKY, et al, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991, p. 273.

The issue of development has become a major preoccupation of the churches, but the churches have not been uncritical participants in the broader debate about the goals and methods for promoting development. They have challenged fundamental assumptions and conceptions, and they called into question many existing patterns for trying to achieve development at both the macro- and micro-levels. Not least significant, they have continuously explored the possible implications of these new insights for their own theories and actions.

For Dickinson the ecumenical movement's involvement with development did not merely represent an activity of a particular factual or quantitative status, that is, of an ecumenical church sector which has unconditionally or uncritically made development one of its major preoccupations. This author suggested that an involvement by the churches presumed a progressive status on two levels. It firstly presumes that such an involvement challenges secular mainstream development discourse and praxis in a distinct way. It secondly presumes that this critical engagement also finds a particular application in terms of the churches' own theories and actions as it challenges the thinking and activities of the church sector in general. We shall devote our attention to these two presumptions as we attempt to examine the ecumenical understanding of development.

3.4.1 Challenging mainstream secular development discourse

Although the ecumenical movement first took its direction from prevailing (secular) views on development, it soon assumed its own critical and distinct views on development. It paved the way for the church's contribution to the development debate by offering new insights that were to impact secular thinking on the subject as well. The latter can be seen in how it refined itself around the three interrelated concepts of economic growth, social justice and self-reliance.

3.4.1.1 *Economic Growth*

Initially, the ecumenical debate about issues related to development, and centred on certain unfortunate features and consequences of economic life that were not seriously questioned. Economic growth was seen as the engine of development and, indeed, was sometimes equated with development and progress. Development was seen as a linear “catching-up” process; countries in the South should follow the example of the West. Therefore, there should be a transfer of knowledge, expertise, technology and resources from the West to the South. In this sense, the ecumenical movement debate was not different from the secular debate on development.

However, by the mid 1970’s, critical voices were raised by large sectors of the ecumenical movement concerning the very idea of development. Dickinson, for example, captures such criticisms for us in the following comment:

Over the last decades, world production has grown, leading to great improvements and benefits for certain groups in society. However, as world production has grown, so has the gap between rich and poor. Moreover, economic growth is taking on the character of jobless growth, thereby contributing to more inequality and exclusion. Economic growth alone and by itself does not solve problems. If it is argued that economic growth is absolutely necessary to remove poverty, then the question is why has it not done so?¹⁷¹

With these kinds of views the ecumenical movement challenged the secular concept of development. Whilst retaining the need for economic growth the ecumenical movement qualified it with social imperatives. The quantitative aspects of development, such as concern about GNP,

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.275

had to be subordinated to *qualitative* goals. With its focus on the “preferential option for the poor” and the emphasis on the poor as agents of development, the ecumenical movement stressed that *human beings* and their communities, rather than economic growth, should be the starting point, the goal and the means, for social change. It is on this issue that there is a clear difference between the ecumenical approach and the prevailing policies of dominant actors in almost all parts of the world.

Parmar points out how the focus on those *below the poverty line* was to influence future policy. In terms of a concrete policy framework this implies: (a) that slum clearance and low-cost housing will take priority over high-cost housing, (b) coarse and medium cloth over fine textiles or synthetic materials, (c) an increase in production of essential commodities over the expansion of a luxury goods sector, (d) small irrigation schemes which reach the low income groups over huge multipurpose projects, (e) training for basic rural health services over the concentration of medical facilities in urban areas, and (f) the increase in health and educational facilities over for example night clubs.¹⁷²

3.4.1.2 *Social Justice*

As already indicated in the section above, the ecumenical definition of development emphasised that economic growth was to be qualified by social imperatives. This meant that the issue of *justice* became an important aspect of economic growth. The focus was to be on those below the poverty line. Such a focus on social justice stressed two significant aspects: Firstly, it called for *distribution* to be based upon the acceptance of “egalitarian values which are to be realised in institutions relating to property, power and opportunity.”¹⁷³ This principle of *equitable* distribution rejected the traditional view of welfare in which distribution is seen as a consequence of growth, and, consequently, in which production takes precedence over distribution.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² S. L. PARMAR, Development: Priorities and Guidelines, in *The Ecumenical Review* 27, 1975, pp. 5-15.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Furthermore, the ecumenical position denounced the mainstream rationale that policies of social justice would act as a disincentive to capital and enterprise. Secondly, as a corollary, the ecumenical movement came to emphasise not only distributive justice, but *commutative* justice.¹⁷⁵ Such an emphasis spoke of justice based on *participation* in shaping the individual's and the community's identity and future. According to the ecumenical view of development, "participation" in economic and political decisions became an indispensable element in any process of development or liberation. Peoples development, rather than some abstract notion of economic development based upon undifferentiated economic growth, saw people as not only the objects of development, but also as the subjects.¹⁷⁶

With the emphasis on social justice as an imperative to economic growth, the ecumenical movement differed from the other prevailing views on development. By seeking to stress that the poor ought to be their own agents of development through participation in the (economic and political) decision-making processes, the ecumenical movement shifted the focus in development from *production-centredness* to *people-centredness*. These views were to influence policy decisions as pointed out in the previous section.

3.4.1.3 *Self-reliance*

The ecumenical movement stated that "the role of the churches is to support the struggle of the poor and oppressed towards justice and self-reliance."¹⁷⁷ The concept of self-reliance radically shifted the development debate. The "dependency" theory came into greater prominence – a view which sees a direct link between the progressive enrichment of those with resources, power and

¹⁷⁵ This was adopted at the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) in Nairobi, 1975.

¹⁷⁶ See RICHARD DICKINSON, Changing Ecumenical Perspectives on Economic Development A contribution to an on-going discussion, in *Development Assessed: Ecumenical Reflections and Actions on Development*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, Unit III Justice, Peace and Creation, 9-12 January, 1995, p. 36.

¹⁷⁷ As quoted in JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Good News to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1977, p. 114.

status, on one side, and the increasing impoverishment of the poor, on the other. The poor were victims of active oppression and far from the level of partnership.¹⁷⁸

The ecumenical movement's focus on self-reliance prompted studies on the theme of domination and dependency. These included several areas: critical studies of the presumed benefits of outright grants of aid; of the conditions and values of technical assistance; of existing terms of trade; of the role of transnational corporations; and of the whole structure of indebtedness and its repercussions. In all these studies, it appeared that the poorer countries were dominated by existing centers of power. Even those instruments of cooperation which had been established ostensibly to enhance economic stability and growth – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund – came under attack as perpetuating the privilege of the “haves”.¹⁷⁹

As a result, the ecumenical movement embarked on “Development education” which was intended to raise the *consciousness* of how disparities between rich and poor were actually being perpetuated and reinforced by the “natural” market forces controlled by rich countries and corporations. Development education sought a systemic analysis of poverty rather than simply raise awareness of how desperate many poor peoples were.

Self-reliance, in the ecumenical understanding, was all about affirming a local people's *self-respect* and *dignity*. Formulated differently, it can be said that a development strategy of self-reliance indicated a fundamental reorientation ‘from below’.¹⁸⁰ It denotes the structural and policy regulation to ensure the authentic participation of a local people. It opts, on the broad socio-economic level, “for local grassroots initiative and innovation yielding results compatible with local conditions, tastes and culture”.¹⁸¹ In concluding, it might be appropriate to point out

¹⁷⁸ CCPD, World Council of Churches, *To Break the Chains of Oppression: Results of a Study Process on Domination and Dependence*, Geneva: WCC, 1975

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ K. FERNANDES, New Questions for Development Workers, in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 28 (3), 1991, pp. 303-304.

¹⁸¹ R. D. N. DICKINSON, *Poor, Yet Making Many Rich: The Poor as Agents of Creative Justice*, Geneva:

that self-reliance captures the essence of a critical modernisation perspective in the ecumenical debate on development.

3.4.2 Challenging the church sector

We indicated earlier that whilst the minority Christian groups attempted to address the concerns of the poor brought about by the industrial revolution, the majority of Christians remained indifferent to the plight of the poor. In fact, the theological conservatism of the latter provided a sacred character to the ideologies that emerged during this time. However, the renewed ecumenical movement was to challenge critically the view of the majority churches. These challenges came in the following ways:

Firstly, the ecumenical movement challenged the majority church to join sides with the poor and oppressed. God's "preferential option for the poor" with emphasis on the poor as agents of development, was worked out in a study process called "Towards a Church in Solidarity with the Poor". The commitment to solidarity with the poor also led to controversies. Who are the poor? Should Christians endorse every action and strategy adopted by the poor people? What is the relationship between poverty and righteousness? With all these discussions, one thing is very clear: the ecumenical movement succeeded in asserting a prominent place for the poor on the agenda of the church.

The concern for the poor led to the ecumenical movement challenging *how* development is to be done. The key emphasis here is that the poor should be active participants in their own struggles and solutions. C.I. Itty captures this in the following comment:

Development is essentially a people's struggle in which the poor and oppressed should be the main protagonists, the active agents and immediate beneficiaries.

WCC, 1983, p. 33.

Therefore, the development process must be seen from the point of view of the poor and oppressed masses who are the subjects and not the objects of development. The role of the churches and Christian communities everywhere should be essentially supportive.¹⁸²

At this point, in relation to the church's solidarity with the poor, the ecumenical understanding of development most clearly converges with the message of liberation theology. It was explicitly stipulated at the ecumenical consultation at Montreux in 1974 that 'liberation' represented the new word for 'development'.¹⁸³

Secondly, the ecumenical movement challenged the *church versus the world* dichotomy that was so prevalent in theological and ecclesiastical thinking and praxis. By the second half of the sixties a passionate debate took place among Christian leaders, Christian ethicists, missiologists and concerned laity, about the orientation of Christian action beyond the borders of traditional Christian nations. Broadly stated, the question which was discussed expressed a dilemma: what should churches promote: mission or development? Julio de Santa Ana states that "the question itself indicated the existence of a growing awareness among the people of the churches."¹⁸⁴ Finally, the positive attitude in favour of the church's participation in development was ratified at the 4th General Assembly of the WCC.

Such an acceptance in favour of the church's participation in development led the ecumenical movement to call for a *new theological orientation* in the church's thinking, especially as it related to the world. Rendtorff indicates this in the following comment:

The dominant themes of the general Christian awareness are no longer specifically

¹⁸² Quoted in R. DICKINSON, Development, in Lossky, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991, p.272.

¹⁸³ G. LINNENBRINK, Solidarity with the Poor: The Role of the Church in the Conflict over Development, in *The Ecumenical Review* 27 (4), 1975, p. 271.

¹⁸⁴ JULIO DE SANTA ANA, Development and Civil Society, in *Development Assessed*, Op. cit., p.120.

churchly in the sense that the special identity of the Christian church is the first consideration. The main interest is directed rather to the world development in all its aspects. More and more the churches are seeing themselves as part of a Christian process which thematically and institutionally leads far beyond the boundaries of the established churches and the theological overtures they have hitherto made toward mutual understanding.¹⁸⁵

The above comment indicates the *comprehensive* approach the ecumenical movement attached to the meaning of development. It viewed development as a multifaceted undertaking. People should be at the centre of development. Therefore, development should primarily be social development. It is in this field of social development that the ecumenical movement has made important contributions through its focus on community development projects and programmes, education and training, an emphasis on social justice, people's participation, the role of people's movements and the need of networking between them. More recently, this emphasis has been translated in the efforts of the WCC to probe the notion of "civil society".

The attempt to close the gap between the church and the world found expression in a new theme considered by the ecumenical movement. From the mid-1980s onward, "Justice, peace and integrity of creation" (JPIC) became the rallying theme of the WCC. The conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to JPIC emphasised that Christian resistance against the powers of death, is part and parcel of confessing Christ as the life of the world. Struggles for justice, peace and integrity of creation cannot be separated; they need to be kept together in a dynamic relationship. Because of this holistic approach, it has been argued that JPIC may be a new ecumenical term for development.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in IGNATIUS SWART, *The Churches and the Development Debate*, Op. cit. p.37.

¹⁸⁶ For more on this theme see, D. PREMAN NILES, *Justice, Peace and The Integrity of Creation: Towards an ecumenical process of commitment*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994.

It can be seen that the ecumenical movement posed a challenge to the church sector concerning development. A development discourse, as evident in the ecumenical understanding, took the concept of development beyond a charitable mode of understanding. It exceeded the boundaries of traditional theological and ecclesiastical language and adopted a distinct critical *social theoretical* content. The movement's central concepts of (qualitative) economic growth, social justice and self-reliance display a clear ethico-political agenda. It thus can be said that an ecumenical development discourse has clearly distinguished itself as an exponent of an *alternative development* corpus. Swart sums up the ecumenical movement's discourse on development in the following statement:

In the very normative and ethico-political sense, the ecumenical discourse on development could perhaps be best described as a discourse *from below*, which has made the poor, the environment, but also human (holistic) well-being in general, its central concern. It has come to regard the latter category as a concern or perspective that opposes the dominant ideology from above's imposition of a narrow-minded economic meaning onto human well-being. It has come to rethink structures and policy – economic, political and social – to enable poor and hitherto marginalised societies and people, to become centres of direct *participation*, to sustain a new responsible *stewardship of nature* and to foster *holistic well-being* of human persons in general.¹⁸⁷

3.5 SUMMARY

In this section we have shown how the Christian church from its inception has attempted to transform society. We have pointed out that the Church (over the years) seemed to have lost its initial focus on the poor, however, this was always retained by small groups of Christians attempting to remain faithful to the Gospel. The 20th century saw a renewal and commitment in

¹⁸⁷ I. SWART, *The Churches and the Development Debate*, Op. cit., p.60.

the “option for the poor.” It also saw the (ecumenical) church’s acceptance of the concept of development. Since this study is about churches and development in South Africa, the author considers it necessary to trace the *notion* of development in the South African context.

In attempting to indicate this he will undertake a brief survey of Christian mission in South Africa. And by outlining the *humanitarian concerns* of the early missionaries in this context the author shall point to the notion of development.

3.6 MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.6.1 Introduction

Mission practice and theology in South Africa has always had a focus on development in so far as missionaries worked towards the human well-being of the local people. Although most of the missionaries sought to advance the commercial interests of the countries they represented (as we shall show) a number of missionaries, however, ended up seeking to transform the lives of the indigenous people as well. They devoted a great amount of time and energy to educate, train and provide skills training for the local people. This resulted in the founding of many mission schools, stations and communities. We see in the mission of the Church in South Africa a definite social, political and economic concentration aimed at the comprehensive well-being of the people.

The rise of Black Theology and African Christian Theology further express the fact that the Church in South Africa has always been involved in development: the creation of a new and just society in line with God’s will. We shall now attempt a brief historical survey of the mission of the Church in South Africa. Our aim here is to show that the mission of the church in South Africa always attempted to address human needs.

3.6.2 Missionaries in South Africa and their humanitarian concerns

South African church history began with the arrival of the Portuguese explorers in the sixteenth century and the Dutch in the next. Other Western European explorers visited or circumnavigated the Southern tip of Africa, but it was the Dutch who were the first white people to settle within the boundaries of modern South Africa, and it was they who brought Christianity. They came, however, not as missionaries but as agents of commerce. It was the task of Jan van Riebeeck to establish a refreshment station in the Cape. His job was to ensure that fresh provisions were available for passing ships.

Before the arrival of these explorers the country was inhabited by a mixture of people. In the West, where the Dutch landed were the Bushmen. From South West Africa to Natal were the Hottentots. In the eastern part of the sub-continent were the African people, known as the Bantu or Nguni (the ancestors of Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi and Ndebele tribes), who came into South Africa from the North.¹⁸⁸

The Dutch East India Company was not concerned with the religious needs of the Cape. In fact, they feared that missionaries would be a menace to the best commercial interests of the Company. This is also the reason why Majeke can interpret the whole missionary effort in South Africa as the method by which the ultimate aim, namely the introduction of capitalism, was to be achieved.¹⁸⁹ Majeke presses strong claims that the missionaries had acted as agents of “divide and rule” policies; that they had been political advisors to the colonisers; that they had helped to evolve “Native” policy; and that they had been apologists for ruthless military campaign and eulogists of the governor.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ PETER HINCHCLIFF, *The Church in South Africa*, London: SPCK, 1968, p11.

¹⁸⁹ See N. MAJEKE, *The Role of Missionaries in Conquest*, Johannesburg: Society of Young Africa, 1952.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.54.

One cannot deny that most missionaries were motivated by the desire to transmit the values and structures embodied in British imperial colonialist expansion.¹⁹¹ This fact is well illustrated in the words of the Bishop of Grahamstown who wrote in 1897 that:

... missionary work, viewed under the light of the Eternal Purpose of God (is) the inner meaning of history, ...the far-off divine event to which the whole of creation moves... (It is the call) as citizens of our British Empire, and as sons and daughters of our British church, to rise up, in furtherance of this end, to their imperial responsibility and their imperial mission and destiny.¹⁹²

This problematical tendency in Christian mission in South Africa was very clearly embodied in the life and missionary convictions of David Livingstone. His belief that Christianity, commerce and (Western) civilisation go together, is well known and had a strong impact on generations of missionaries in South Africa. Assuredly, missionaries were concerned to befriend the indigenous people, as we shall see. But their desire was conversion, the dynamics of which were by no means politically, economically or ideology neutral.¹⁹³

The Sick Comforters who usually traveled on the passing ships often attended to the spiritual needs of the Dutch settlers but there was no direct interest in the indigenous people. The first Sick Comforter at the Cape, Willem Wylant, tried to gather together some of the Khoikhoi to teach them about Christ, but he found that they would not stay in one place for any length in time. Pieter van der Stael, the second Sick Comforter, tried to establish a school for the children of slaves. This, however, was not very successful. His successor, Ernest Bax, set up a mixed school for whites and slaves and one Khoikhoi child. This experiment did not last long because Bax left the Cape in 1666 after only three years.

¹⁹¹ It is not within the scope of this research to illustrate this fact. However, for that purpose see, JAMES COCHRANE, *Servants of Power: The Role of English-speaking Churches 1903-1930*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987. He does a remarkable attempt at proving this point.

¹⁹² Quoted in COCHRANE, *Ibid.*, p.20.

¹⁹³ COCHRANE, *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Although the Dutch Reformed Church showed very little interest in mission work, the Moravian Brethren sent missionaries to the Khoikhoi in July 1737.¹⁹⁴ The arrival of Georg Schmidt saw the first real missionary attempt among the indigenous people. Schmidt eventually settled at Genadendal where he built himself a hut, made a garden and taught the Khoikhoi to speak and read Dutch. He tried to learn their language but found it a bit too difficult to master the “clicks”. He taught them the basics of the Christian faith. He established classes for children and adults and taught them how to read and write and learn skills. This alarmed the Dutch settlers who feared the loss of labour on their farms if the indigenous people were to become educated. We see in this a genuine attempt to educate the local people so that they could take their rightful place in society (human development). Schmidt started Sunday services and by the end of 1737 his congregation consisted of 28 people. Later a problem emerged when he began to baptise converts. He eventually left the Cape in 1743 and was never to return again.

In November 1792 Brothers Marsveld, Schwinn, and Kuhnel arrived in the colony and made their way to Schmidt’s old settlement at Genadendal. There they found the work still held together by an indigenous woman known by many as ‘Lena’. They soon re-established the station and created a new Christian congregation and community. The mission expanded fairly rapidly, perhaps more rapidly than the Brethren really desired. New centers had to be opened to cope with the numbers. The Brethren had each been trained in a trade and they were able to make most of the things they needed. They also taught the people various crafts in addition to reading and writing and the principles of Christianity. These missionaries attempted to develop the local people and their community.

The settlements became villages where the dignity of labour, the skills of the trades themselves, elementary general education, and standards of civilised living were all taught, together with the gospel. They were disciplined communities where the indigenous people were encouraged to live their whole lives so that the moral standards might be maintained. Fortuitously there was

¹⁹⁴ For more info. See BERNHARD KRUGER, *The Pear Tree Blossoms: The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa, 1737-1869*, Genadendal, 1966.

developed a missionary strategy which aimed at the creation of communities into which the heathen were to be brought. They were to be converted out of one kind of society and culture into another, and in these new communities, these *ecclesiolae*, they were to remain for the rest of their days. The Moravian pattern worked so well in practice that it became the ideal for many other Christians. For example, the pioneers of the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan, Scottish, French, Rhenish, Berlin, American and Anglican Missions were influenced by the Genadendal pattern for organising missionary institutions. It was to be a permanent factor in South African Church history.

In 1799 there arrived at the Cape the first L.M.S. missionary, Johannes Theodorus Vanderkemp who was trained in medicine at Edinburgh. After eventually settling in Bethelsdorp, he attempted to establish a self-supporting community like the Moravian settlements. In a lengthy letter to the Governor he pointed out that the chief aim of such an institution ought to be to promote the knowledge of Christ and the practice of real piety, both by instruction and example, while seeking the temporal happiness and usefulness of this Society, with respect to the country at large. He dealt at great length with his intention to ensure that those living in the institution should be “employed in different useful occupations, for the cultivation of their rational faculties, or exercise of the body, as means of subsistence, and of promoting the welfare of this Society, and the colony at large”. He envisaged agriculture and cattle farming, trades and “little manufactories of paper, tanning, pot-making, brick-making and turning”. He proposed that all engaged in the various types of work be regarded as journeymen in the service of the institution, paid weekly, and that their products be sold to create a fund “devoted to charitable institutions of a missionary nature among the heathen, e.g., the erection of other missionary settlements, an orphan house, in which abandoned and fatherless children may be educated, or the subsistence of the sick, old, or poor.”¹⁹⁵ It is clear from this that Vanderkemp attempted to develop society because of Christ. He saw community and people development as part of his Christian responsibility.

¹⁹⁵ HINCHCLIFF, *Ibid.*, pp.20-24.

Not all writers, however, view Vanderkemp in a positive light. For example, Majeke believes that he was a most useful agent of the government by utilising the Bethelsdorp Mission Station to draw Khoikhoi away from the leadership of the rebellious Klaas Stuurman; to provide a military outpost which assisted the fight against Ndlambe's Xhosas; to collect taxes; and to set the pattern for providing reservoirs of labour for neighbouring farms.¹⁹⁶ What Majeke's criticisms probably indicate here is that some of these Christian missionaries were attempting to propagate the Gospel and at the same time seeking to implement the modernisation theory of development which deeply influenced the industrial revolution.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the San peoples had almost disappeared from the Cape Colony though some had fled to places of refuge further inland. The Khoikhoi had been virtually reduced to the position of landless serfs by the middle of the eighteenth century. Most of them were labourers on the Dutch farms and only a few small clans remained independent. Dutch trek-farmers and black tribesmen lived as uneasy neighbours in the frontier districts. White settler societies were claiming occupation of the land and asserting political rights at the expense of black societies.¹⁹⁷ They were, no doubt, influenced by the political, social and economic developments taking place in Britain.

Western aggression, cultural arrogance and capitalist imperialism have come under attack from revisionist historians for many decades. The role of the church and, more particularly the missionaries, in South African history have come under heavy criticism. The missionaries in particular have been castigated as the collaborators of an imperialism that was anything but just or righteous. The liberation which early British missionaries preached was therefore, according to Majeke, nothing more than the liberation from feudalism to capitalism. Majeke points out that in order to achieve this, missionaries in the classical liberal sense acted as intercessors for the blacks with the colonial government, as intercessors between the oppressor and the oppressed.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ COCHRANE, *Servants of Power*, p.22.

¹⁹⁷ J.W. HOFMEYR & GERALD J. PILLAY (eds.), *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, Pretoria: HAUM Tertiary, 1994, p.36.

¹⁹⁸ MAJEKE, *Ibid.*

Missionaries have been seen as playing a major role in undermining the life and culture of the indigenous tribes in order to make them victims of easy conquest.¹⁹⁹ Missionaries were certainly victims of their time and they most definitely promoted western culture, imperialism and civilisation. However, as we shall see, they certainly did fight for the liberation and justice of the oppressed indigenous people. Saayman puts it well, "Simply writing them off as stooges of the colonial authority will therefore be as mistaken as simply eulogising them as fearless fighters for the rights of oppressed colonised peoples. Their relationships with the colonial government and its subjects were characterised as much by moral ambivalence as is the whole of our human predicament."²⁰⁰

In 1820 the LMS appointed Dr. John Philip as Superintendent in the Cape. Alongside his responsibility for the work of the LMS, Philip was deeply concerned about two problems which led to his involvement in the political affairs of the Cape Colony; the continual unrest between black and white on the frontiers of the colony and the position of the Khoikhoi in the colony.

In 1828 Philip published his book called *Researches in South Africa* in which he blamed whites for the continual unrest and sporadic warfare. He also championed the social and political rights of the Khoikhoi and called for all free persons of colour to have same legal rights as white colonists. In attempting to secure just treatment for the local people, he fought for their right to give or withhold their labour to the white farmers. He believed that the indigenous people needed to be trained and equipped to fulfill other roles. He hoped that this would take care of the problems of vagrancy and forced labour. He therefore encouraged them to live in the mission stations or other places of refuge so that they could be "sufficiently civilised to take their place as full citizens of the colony".²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ For more critical views in this regard see, N. ETHERINGTON, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880, African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, and Zululand*, London: Royal Historical Society, 1978.

²⁰⁰ W. SAAYMAN, *Christian Missions in South Africa: Achievements, Failures and the Future*. In *Christianity in South Africa*, M. PROZESKY (ed.), South Africa: Southern Book Pub., 1990, p.34.

²⁰¹ HINCHCLIFF, *Ibid.*, pp.25-26.

Naturally, Philip was hated and deeply resented by many of the white colonists. Today he is often praised as one of the first champions of the oppressed peoples of South Africa. Most liberal commentators sympathetic to Philip have seen him predominantly from the view of the twentieth century revulsion against racism.²⁰² However, others see him as a valuable servant of the free trade principles of early capitalism. Majeke perceived Philip's close ties to the rising industrial elite and their imperial ambitions, and cites him appealing for a liberal native policy in most disabusing manner:

By adopting a more liberal system of policy towards this interesting class of subjects, he declared, 'they will be more productive, there will be an increased consumption of British manufactures, taxes will be paid and farmers will have no cause to complain of lack of labour.'²⁰³

Since the Reformation in the 16th century, the Church of Scotland has always had a deep concern for education. This dual interest of the Church of Scotland in education and mission was to be characteristic of Scottish missions in South Africa. Missionary education was European or western-style education- the mission schools used the same teaching methods and taught the same subjects as schools for children in England, France, Germany, Norway, America, etc. Apart from the fact that the missionaries did not know enough about the African traditions and methods of education, their attempts to teach the European ways was a deliberate course of action. The above view, however, is highly questionable. The often insufficiently examined assumption behind most Protestant missionary effort was that education would bring out the full potential of the individual and thus increase the real wealth of the community. The interest here was not so much the development of the person in as much as it was the focus on economic advancement. In many ways the missionaries, either consciously or unconsciously, worked towards the expansion of western civilisation and capitalism. However it would be untrue to say that they were exclusively to this intention. This can be seen in the fact that the missionaries had to face both

²⁰² A recent example is J. SALES, *The Planting of Churches in South Africa*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

²⁰³ In COCHRANE, *Servants of Power*, p.22.

black and white prejudice: from the former because the school portended breaches of custom by transferring authority to the literate, and from the latter because education seemed to give the blacks airs if not other powers.²⁰⁴

Whatever the case, it is evident that mission education helped produce a new class of black South Africans with definite political aspirations. For example, in 1899 Martin Luthuli, Saul Msane and Josiah Gumede met with Henriette Colenso to discuss the founding of an African political organisation. Almost all the leaders of the Natal Native Congress, which met in July 1900, and of the “Iliso le-Sizwe Esimnyama”, which was founded in 1908, were members of missionary societies.

The mission schools such as Healdtown (Methodist), Lovedale and Fort Hare (Presbyterian), Tigerkloof (Congregational), Mariannhill (Roman Catholic), Modderpoort and St Peter’s (Anglican) and Inanda (American Board Mission), produced students who were well-educated, responsible, confident, thinking people. This kind of school tried to give Christian education-education based on the belief that all people of all races were the children of one God and should be helped to develop the character God had given them. This significantly led to the black resistance of white political, social and economic domination.

Good or bad, mission schools had an important place in South African education up to the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In 1945, there were 4,360 mission schools, compared with 230

²⁰⁴ CALVIN COOK, Christians and Education in South Africa, in *Christianity in South Africa*, M. PROZESKY (ed.), South Africa: Southern Book Publishers (Pty) Ltd., 1990, p173.

government schools for Blacks. One of the most successful mission schools was Lovedale.²⁰⁵ Hinchliff says of Stewart's work as Principal of this school:

Under his leadership the institution became perhaps the foremost educational centre in all Southern Africa. The declared aim of Lovedale was to teach trades and crafts and to produce preachers and teachers. But there was also an emphasis upon strict and high academic standards and upon having properly qualified lay men and women on the staff. The institution continued to provide a common education for black and white pupils and there was a deliberate mixing of the races so that they might come to know one another. A hospital was eventually added to all the other activities of the institution and became the first place in the country at which Africans could be fully trained as nurses. In a sense all higher education for Africans emanated from Lovedale.²⁰⁶

Greg Cuthbertson treads cautiously with this view by pointing out that Lovedale represented 'the confluence of the streams of imperialist missionary and emergent African middle class thought.'²⁰⁷ He further adds that though Stewart was outspoken on the question of the South African War as a crusade on behalf of Africans, "some of his statements may lead to the erroneous conclusion that he was a champion of equality for Africans in all spheres. But he did at least put forward some specific proposals for a future African franchise."²⁰⁸

In seeking political rights and justice for the indigenous people some of the missionaries were set on establishing mission schools to educate the locals. They probably saw education as the key to liberation. In so doing, they were working towards the establishment of a new and just society. However, it must be pointed out that not all missionaries were involved in the transformation of society and, if they were, not all of them had pure intentions of seeking to help the local people.

²⁰⁵ For more on Lovedale see G.C. OOSTHUIZEN, *Shepherd of Lovedale*, South Africa: Hugh Keartland Pub. Ltd., 1970. See also a more recent study, GRAHAM A. DUNCAN, 'Coercive Agency': *James Henderson's Lovedale, 1906-1930*, Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria: UNISA, 2001.

²⁰⁶ HINCHLIFF, p.88.

²⁰⁷ In HOFMEYER & PILLAY (eds.), *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, Ibid., p. 160.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

As we have already indicated, some missionaries were more bent on spreading the values of western imperialism, colonialism and capitalism often not taking into consideration the culture, values and life experience of the indigenous people.

The end result was that the church contributed toward the segregation of South African society. As Cochrane so ably establishes, the church driven by colonialism and capitalism defended and supported the government's policies on land and labour.²⁰⁹ The church was trapped by the socio-economic and political ideologies of the apartheid government. Consequently, this rendered it impotent to work towards a theology of radical social involvement or development. When the Nationalist government came into power it implemented the policy of separate development, no doubt, based on capitalist tendencies.²¹⁰ Economic wealth and political power was in the hands of the minority white whilst the majority black population in South Africa were marginalised and oppressed. Most alarming was the fact that the Dutch Reformed Church (even) provided theological justification for the apartheid policy. As a result, the church in South Africa for a long time sided with the rich and powerful instead of the poor and oppressed. However the rise of the Ecumenical Movement eventually challenged this position as it took sides with the *poor* and *oppressed*.

We have thus far, in this section above, critically examined the work of the early missionaries in South Africa. We have attempted to observe this from the perspective of the notion of development. Whilst there is ample evidence that a small group of missionaries did engage in humanitarian work as they built schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc., challenged and guided legislation, yet it can be hardly described as development. The involvement with the poor describes the notion of charity, aid, welfare, relief and compassion - not development. However, what we observe here are the '*stirrings*' or '*seeds*' of development. The main reason why the

²⁰⁹ COCHRANE, *Servants of Power*, pp. 98-122.

²¹⁰ Although this is a debatable view since the Afrikaners were themselves reacting to British imperialism, in my view they were no doubt influenced by racial capitalism.

majority of churches failed to engage development in South Africa is because they failed to completely identify with the oppressed and poor, instead they supported the ideologies of the apartheid government. The ecumenical movement in South Africa was to take up the “option for the poor”.

3.6.3 The Ecumenical Church in South Africa

The search for unity in South Africa grew out of the needs of mission. Inspired by the American Board of Missionaries (ABM), the first Natal Missionary Conference was held in 1881. In 1904 a General Missionary Conference was held in Johannesburg, attended by 80 delegates from 21 missionary societies and Churches. The conference saw mission as having three sides or strands: (1) proclamation of the gospel, (2) education, and (3) medical Aid.

In June 1936 the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) was formed and the General Missionary Council ceased to exist. In 1949, the CCSA started to protest against the apartheid laws imposed by the Nationalist Government in South Africa. In October 1954 a circular was sent to heads of churches and superintendents of missions to investigate their attitude towards the Bantu Education Act. The Committee believed that the Act would violate certain principles of education. This greatly stirred the Sharpeville incident in 1960, and the subsequent banning of black organisations. The result was the Cottesloe Consultation in December 1960 which attempted to address “Christian race relations and social problems in South Africa”.²¹¹ The final statement emerging from this consultation had three parts:

- Part 1 rejects all unjust discrimination.
- Part 2 recognised “that all racial groups who permanently inhabit our country are part of our total population... Members of all these groups have an equal right to make their contribution towards the enrichment of the life of their country and to share in the ensuing responsibilities,

²¹¹ For more info. on this see C. RYAN, *Beyers Naude: Pilgrimage of Faith*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1990, p.53f.

rewards and privileges.” The statement criticised the migrant labour system, the low wages of Blacks, and job reservation, and spoke of the need for consultation between race groups on all matters which affected them.

- Part 3 made definite suggestions and decisions on urgent issues such as justice in trials, freedom of multiracial worship, the future consultation and co-operation between the Churches.

Clearly, one can see from this that the CCSA was working towards the development of the human person and community, free from discrimination, racism, exploitation and oppression. Assisted by the World Council of Churches (WCC), a Department of Inter-Church Aid was started in 1962, to collect and distribute funds for disaster relief and community development projects. In 1968 the CCSA became known as “The South African Council of Churches” (SACC). The SACC became more and more a place where the Churches could witness together on the problems which faced them in South Africa – above all, the social and political problems produced by the government’s apartheid policy.²¹²

The evil of apartheid was clearly exposed in two documents that attempted to express a Christian and theological understanding of South African society: The Message to the People of South Africa (1968) and The Kairos Document (September 1985). The message was a serious attempt to interpret what the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ means and implies within our complex and difficult situation.²¹³ The key question concerning the message was: Who does my first loyalty go to- a human being; an ethnic group; a tradition; a political ideology or to Christ? The document called on Christians to be truthful to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be aware of the false gospel (apartheid). The message stated that apartheid by its very nature is both divisive and antithetical of a just social order and reconciliation. Hence, it established that the struggle for justice is for the sake of overcoming the alienation of our social order and enabling reconciliation

²¹² For more info. on the SACC see SOL JACOB, *Hope In Crisis: South African Council of Churches*, Johannesburg: SACC, 1986.

²¹³ D. M. BALIA, *Christian Resistance to Apartheid*, Braamfontein: Skotaville, 1989, p.33.

between the conflicting parties to become a reality.²¹⁴ The most significant fact that emerges here is that the “message” drew the church into addressing the socio-economic and political injustices of the time. This was to be further enhanced by the formulation of the Kairos Document much later.

The Kairos Document is a Christian, biblical and theological commentary on the political crisis in the country that took seriously the experiences of black people. The document spoke of the crisis in the church, which was born out of the divisions in the church. Consequently three trends developed from these divisions, i.e. state, church and prophetic theology.²¹⁵ The document challenged the state on its ideologies and condemned apartheid as a heresy. More particularly it challenged church theology in three interrelated ways.²¹⁶ Firstly, it pointed out that church theology lacked *social analysis* and that the analysis of apartheid which underpins its theology is simply inadequate. Secondly, this theology lacked an adequate understanding of politics and *political strategy*. Changing the structures of a society is fundamentally a matter of politics. It requires a political strategy based upon a clear social or political analysis. The Church has to address itself to these strategies and to the analyses upon which they are based. It is into this political situation that the Church has to bring the gospel. Hence there is no way of bypassing politics and political strategies. Thirdly, it challenged the type of *faith* and *spirituality* that has dominated Church life for centuries. Spirituality has tended to be an other-world affair that has very little, if anything at all, to do with the affairs of this world. Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the Church. The Kairos Document rejected this notion. It asserted that the Bible does not separate the human person from the world in which he or she lives; it does not separate the individual from the

²¹⁴ JOHN W. DE GRUCHY, The Struggle for Justice and Ministry of Reconciliation, in KLAUS NÜRNBERGER & JOHN TOOKE (Eds.), *The Cost of Reconciliation in South Africa*, NIR reader no. 1, Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House, 1988, p.169.

²¹⁵ State theology is the semi-religious ideology of the modern apartheid state, in other words the status quo's justification of racism and capitalism. Church theology was particularly noticeable among the English-speaking churches, where they generally spoke of reconciliation, justice and non-violence without critical analysis of the socio-political conditions. Prophetic theology was seen to be based on a critical analysis of the concrete historical situation, and it concluded that the apartheid regime was illegal and unreformable and had to be replaced by majority rule.

²¹⁶ The Kairos Document, in NÜRNBERGER & TOOKE, *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

social, or one's private life from one's public life. God redeems the whole person as part of God's whole creation. Hence a truly biblical spirituality would penetrate into every aspect of human existence and would exclude nothing from God's redemptive will.²¹⁷ We see in this document a new theological orientation in South Africa that directed itself to a radical social involvement.

The document did not give a blueprint for an alternative political future, but challenged the church to side with God by deliberately supporting the oppressed and poor. The challenge of the Kairos Document led to the "Concerned Evangelicals" and other people drafting documents like "Pentecostal Witness in South Africa" (1986) and "A Relevant Pentecostal Witness" (1988).²¹⁸

The ecumenical movement in South Africa identified itself with the poor as it joined forces with the exploited working class. Embracing liberation theology, it insisted that God is on the side of the poor and it therefore joined with the poor to fight for justice and human rights. In seeking the *liberation* of the oppressed it radically opposed the structures that dehumanised the masses. It encouraged the *participation* of the poor in the processes of enabling them to become more *human*. It raised *consciousness* of the oppressed in South Africa both internally and internationally. The SACC actively resisted the apartheid laws that were imposed on the majority people in South Africa by calling for disinvestments and international sanctions on South Africa. As a plan of action, the SACC decided on the following:²¹⁹

1. The Council was convinced that disinvestment and similar economic pressure would be effective to force the authorities to make fundamental changes.
2. Churches overseas were called on to continue applying economic pressure.
3. The above-mentioned issues had to get more attention in the management structure of the council, i.e. regional councils, member churches and congregations were requested to study

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

²¹⁸ J.W. HOFMEYER & GERALD J. PILLAY, Ibid., p.288.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 293.

and discuss those matters.

4. The commission for justice and reconciliation was requested to nominate a group to study the question of economic justice and disinvestment and economic sanctions as well as to evaluate and coordinate the reactions of churches and to provide church leaders with information.
5. A call would be made to member churches and individual Christians to divest their money and energy in alternative economic systems.

The SACC was deeply influenced by the challenge offered by the Black Consciousness movement in 1969. As Beyers Naude put it, "The Black Consciousness movement, led by a crop of dynamic young leaders who were affirming the power and dignity of black people, made its appearance."²²⁰ This subsequently gave rise to Black Theology in South Africa which is described essentially as a political theology in that it seeks to affirm the rights and dignity of black people.²²¹ We also see in this a serious focus on human development as it stresses the dignity of black people and fights against racism in South Africa. In this regard, John de Gruchy points out that Black Theology has its foundations in the work of the early missionaries:

...whatever the faults of the missionaries, from a black as well as a white perspective, it is true to say that the church's struggle against racism and injustice in South Africa only really begins in earnest with their witness in the nineteenth century.²²²

The early missionaries, especially in the 19th century, are to be commended for sowing the seed from which the black churches of the 20th century grew. They did extensive evangelistic work, built churches, schools and hospitals. Not only were these important aspects of their ministries at that time, but were also foundations for subsequent developments.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the rise and development of the African Independent

²²⁰ C. RYAN, *Ibid.*, p 124.

²²¹ On the history of Black Theology in South Africa see L. KRETZSCHMAR, *The Voice Of Black Theology In South Africa*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986, pp.1-13.

²²² J. W. DeGRUCHY, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1979, p.13.

Churches (AIC).²²³ One may distinguish here between the 'Ethiopian Movement' (whose leadership came largely from the African elite and wealthy peasant farmers) and the 'Zionist Movement' (strongest among peasants who resisted proletarianisation).²²⁴ Originally the whole phenomenon of African Independent Christianity was interpreted as a protest against the Westernisation of the Christian mission in South Africa. More recent research has shown that the complex phenomenon of the AIC cannot be attributed simplistically to a single protest factor.²²⁵ Some of the reasons suggested for the coming into existence and continuing attraction of these churches are:

1. A protest against conquest and colonial domination;²²⁶
2. a rejection, in many Independent Churches of European culture, and of the keeping of African culture out of the life of the Church;²²⁷
3. racial discrimination and paternalism, especially in the multiracial churches (these churches proclaimed the equality of all races, but often seemed little different in practice from the rest of society);
4. the desire for power and respect brought about by the reluctance to promote Africans to high ecclesiastical office, and an outlet for the leadership gifts of black Christians (including women) which was denied them in other churches;²²⁸
5. a return to the traditional pattern of African society - ideally the chief (church leader) and his tribal community (church congregation) living on their own land (the church property);

²²³ For a detailed account of this see J.W. HOFMYER & G. J. PILLAY, *A History of Christianity in South Africa, Vol. 1*, Johannesburg: HAUM Tertiary, 1994, pp.167-193.

²²⁴ The AIC movement, which Tile started, has proliferated among blacks, and with its 'Ethiopian' section-Ethiopia being a symbol of liberation as the only age-old independent state at that time- its 'Zionist' section (started in 1897) and its 'Apostolic' section (1908), it has grown into a massive independent or indigenous church movement with a membership of about eight million (35 per cent of the black population and about four thousand denominations. See G.C.OOSTHUIZEN, Christianity's Impact on Race Relations in South Africa, in *Christianity in South Africa*, Ibid., p.103.)

²²⁵ See WILLEM SAAYMAN, Christian Missions in South Africa: Achievements, Failures and the Future, in *Christianity in South Africa*, MARTIN PROZESKY (ed.), South Africa: Southern Book Pub., 1990, p.32.

²²⁶ JAMES COCHRANE, Christian Resistance to Apartheid: Periodisation, Prognosis, in *Christianity in South Africa*, Ibid., p. 85.

²²⁷ TAKATSO MOFOKENG, Black Theology in South Africa: Achievements, Problems and Prospects, in *Christianity in South Africa*, Ibid., p. 49.

²²⁸ NORMAN ETHERINGTON, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics*, Ibid., p. 161.

6. The difference between the message preached in European churches and the way many Whites actually lived in South Africa made some Africans doubt the truth and power of European Christianity.
7. Africans see a connection between the religious observance and the realisation of *temporal* goals. It was believed that Christianity should lead to a better way of life in the here and now. When this did not materialise the result was a disappointment among African Christians.²²⁹
8. (Zionism) holds out to the poor and despised self-respect, economic and social support, a healing service and a general sense of security.²³⁰

All these reasons put together illustrate the need of the African community to come into its own standing and recognition. The AIC, especially the Zionists, attempted to develop and give expression to the African way of life.²³¹ This quest was further realised in the rise of African Christian Theology. African Christian Theology is a deliberate attempt to strip Christianity of non-essential additions. African Christian Theology is a decision by Africans to worship God as Africans and to look at and interpret the Bible from an African perspective. It attempts to build on the existing African religious tradition.²³² It tries to tap the resources of the entire African community in arts, literature, sculpture, and all human and academic disciplines. It is therefore, a theology “of the people, by the people, and for the people”. In this we note the people-centred approach to development. The concern of African Theology is to attempt to use African concepts and African ethos as vehicles for the communication of the Gospel in an African context.

The church has been involved in the establishment of society, though its contributions were not at all times positive. In South Africa we have seen how the Dutch Reformed Church, in particular, used its economic and political power to secure the rights of the white minority,

²²⁹ JAMES KIERNAN, African and Christian: From Opposition to Mutual Accommodation, in *Christianity in South Africa*, Ibid., .21.

²³⁰ Ibid., p.23.

²³¹ For characteristics of Zionism see COCHRANE, *Circles of Dignity*, Ibid., pp. 80-81.

²³² JOHN S. POBEE, *Towards an African Theology*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1979,15.

seriously impoverishing the majority black people in South Africa, and even providing theological justification for such economic and political policies. Clearly, the modernisation paradigm of development was adopted in South Africa. This was evident in the policy of separate development which led to the rich white getting richer and the poor black getting poorer. In essence, living under apartheid the church²³³ had no real choice but to fight for the majority of people who were poor and oppressed. In living out the gospel it attempted to transform society and enhance the quality of life of the poor and oppressed. It did all this in the name of Christ, believing that this is God's world. We see in Black Theology and African Christian Theology the inspiration and notion for a theology of development.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The gospel has been making an impact and its fruit is evident everywhere. Missions was not a narrow "soul-saving" venture to dislocate people socially and culturally. It was releasing a positive force in the world that could and would remake the world. Missionaries were not narrow bigots and religious fanatics. They were men and women with the passion of God to make people whole and to create a society and an environment that would make life liveable. The concept "holistic" may be recent, but not its practices. Likewise the concept of development may be new, but it has always been practiced by the Christian Church, whether positively or negatively.

The missionary movement has largely been responsible for putting the issue of development on the agenda of the churches. The best missionaries have never made a dichotomy between the spiritual and the material realms of life. For them, the Gospel, the Good News, was meant for the person as a whole. Inviting people to turn to the Living God, included efforts to improve the material conditions of the people. We have shown in this chapter that the early church expressed a biblical concern for the poor, following in the example of her Lord. The focus here was on people since people were important to Jesus, especially the poor and the marginalised. However,

²³³ By 'church' here I have in mind mainly those churches that were part of the ecumenical movement.

by the time of the Reformation this biblical focus was sidelined even though it was not completely lost. The Reformers persisted in their concern for the poor. The focus soon gave rise to a concentration on economic development and the Reformers seem to have supported the rise of capitalism and industrialisation. However, today there appears to be a new quest for the Church to identify with the world's poor and oppressed. Moreover, the focus today is for an approach to development that is people-centred. This, I believe, is the church's alternative to the paradigms we see in development today. The people-centred approach is the one Jesus used to transform the society of his day. This then must be the approach that the Christian church must return to if she chooses to be faithful to her Lord. The church needs to discover afresh what it means to be *with* the poor in this new South Africa. The church needs to empty herself of western imperialism and inherited capitalistic tendencies that has influenced its structures and views, especially in relation to the poor and powerless. The church in South Africa, in her quest to be relevant, must discover its African roots. We shall return to this in Chapter Seven.

The broad focus in mission inevitably takes seriously the situation of the poor. Hence any focus on development must emphasise the needs of the poor. Is this biblical? We shall attempt a discussion on this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR : THE POOR AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we showed that the Christian church has always had a notion of development in the *history* of its mission. This was usually observed where the church attempted to take the concerns of the poor seriously. In this chapter we aim to show that the church has always had a notion of development in its biblical *theology*. However, because the church did not remain true to its theology, it deviated from the concerns of the poor and from an engagement in development work. To illustrate this point we shall undertake to examine the meaning of the term 'poor' as described in the Bible. In showing this we aim to address the second part to this thesis that the notion of development has always been underlined by a theology that the church failed to pursue. It is our view that we cannot attempt a theology of development without first seeking to understand the biblical theology of the poor.¹

One of the theological miracles of the late 20th century is the rediscovery of the biblical witness to God's particular concern for the poor and oppressed.² Scripture makes clear that God has a particular concern for the poor. It teaches that injustice and oppression are the most fundamental causes of poverty, and that God acts in history to liberate the poor and the victims of injustice. Further, God's people bear special responsibility for the poor. They must stand with the poor, defending the cause of the exploited, the defenseless and the oppressed. As a result, many churches and individual Christians have become involved in working with the poor, fighting for justice and championing the rights of the oppressed and exploited. They have engaged in developmental programmes and projects to help transform and improve the quality of life of the poor, abused and neglected majority in the world. They do this because they believe that the Word of God commissions them to take the needs of the poor seriously. Hence, many Christians

¹See Footnote 14 in this Chapter

² We have shown in the previous chapter that the Church has shown a special concern for the poor. However, only later has this received the full biblical validation in a new era.

have felt compelled to assert that the Gospel is firstly for the poor. Is this assertion valid? Before we seek to answer this question, we must first ask: Who are the *poor* for Jesus? Are they the hungry and the materially deprived as the term is so often used today?

4.2 THE POOR IN SCRIPTURE

Poverty is a central theme both in the Old and New Testaments. It is treated both briefly and profoundly; it describes social situations and expresses spiritual experiences communicated only with difficulty; it defines personal attitudes, a whole people's attitude before God, and the relationship of people with each other.³ The Bible gives attention not to wealth and poverty as the accumulation or lack of riches as a commodity, but to the relationships between people which poverty and wealth express. Scripture speaks of the poor in economic, socio-political and spiritual terms. My concern in this chapter, however, is especially with those who are economically poor, in part through injustice and oppression.

4.2.1 The Old Testament

The Old Testament places different connotations on the questions of wealth and poverty. In the wisdom literature, for instance, wealth is regarded as both a blessing from God and the fruit of one's labour. An analysis of the Hebrew term BRK shows that in the pentateuchal narratives, Yahweh's blessing on the patriarchs become tangible among other things also in their wealth. Deuteronomy emphasises the close connection between human actions and divine response. If Israel lives according to God's ordinances God will bless her "in the works of her hands" (Deut.7). This line of thinking is pursued in the wisdom literature as well. Where God blesses he gives numerous descendants (Ps. 112:2; 128:3 ff; Job 42:13); landed property (Ps. 37:22), abundant livestock (Job 1:10; 42:12), and wealth (Ps. 112:1-3; Prov. 3:9 ff; 10:15). (Prov. 12:27; 20:13) Moreover, poverty is punishment (Prov. 10:4.6 and 16).⁴

³ See GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ' discussion on poverty in, *A Theology Of Liberation*, 1971, pp. 287-302.

⁴ Although this view on Poverty is biblically expressed, however, it is not dominant.

It is certainly true that God's blessing in the Jewish and Christian tradition is seen as prosperity and not want. The children of Israel are promised a land flowing with milk and honey. The "Kingdom of God" would be a 'kingdom' of plenty:

The time is surely coming, says the Lord,
When the one who ploughs shall overtake the one who reaps,
And the treader of grapes the one who sows the seed;
The mountains shall drip sweet wine,
And all the hills shall flow with it.
I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they
Shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
And they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.
I will plant them upon their land,
And they shall never again be plucked up
Out of the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God.
(Amos 9:13-15.)

However, this vision of prosperity was never intended for an exclusive group of people at the expense of others. In the first place, the blessing of God is for the whole community, not just for certain individuals within it.⁵ This point comes through strongly in the prophecy from Isaiah and in the institution of the jubilee. In Christian tradition this has been continued in the institution of tithing, the free gift of one tenth of people's income, in recognition of responsibility towards others. Secondly, the vision here is of holding in trust, not outright possession.⁶ Thirdly, far and away the most common context of these visions of plenty was a pledge to a people in *exile*. They were dispossessed, of a new community of justice and peace. They were spoken to the poor, not to the rich. They were a protest against the established order, not a sanctification of it.

⁵ SARAH WHITE & ROMY TIONGCO, *Doing Theology and Development*, Op. Cit., p.53.

⁶ Ibid., p.53.

When we turn to the works of the pre-exilic prophets a completely different picture presents itself. We do not find the term “blessing,” instead we find an extremely critical evaluation of earthly wealth. Especially in the writings of the prophets Amos, Isaiah and Micah we find violent attacks on the affluence of their contemporaries. (Am. 3: 12-15; 5:11; 6:4, Is.1: 29-31; 3:16-24; 5:11-12).

But why did the prophets condemn affluence? G.Wittenberg answers this question simply. He states that the condemnation of luxury is a correlate to the prophetic condemnation of social injustices, and both have to be considered together.⁷ This is most obvious in Amos 4:1:

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan
Who are in the mountains of Samaria,
who oppress the poor (*dalim*)
who crush the needy (*ebyonim*)
who say to their husbands bring that we may drink. (RSV).

The society of ancient Israel supported the ‘moral economy’ as part of its religious expectations. The wealthy had a God-given responsibility to care for the poor and needy in their community. Abuses of traditional obligations angered the great prophets of Israel, who echo again and again that it offends Yahweh to see the rich take advantage of the poor, the orphans and the widows. Righteousness is seen as something that must be achieved at a community level. Piety divorced from the struggle for justice is condemned as offensive to God (for example see Is.1: 11-17).

So, it is evident that the wealthy are condemned because of their exploitation of the *poor* and needy. The *poor* then are those who are at the mercy of the rich. They are the underdogs and oppressed of society. Gort, however, cautions us on viewing the poor in such an exclusive

⁷ See GUNTHER WITTENBERG’S paper, The Message of the Old Testament Prophets during the Eight Century BC Concerning Affluence and Poverty, in *Affluence, Poverty And The Word Of God*, K. NÜRNBERGER (ed.), 1978, p. 142.

sense.⁸ He points out that the terms poor (rich) and poverty (wealth) are used in several different ways and combinations in Scripture; sometimes they refer exclusively to one group, sometimes inclusively to all; in one context they have a material significance, in another a spiritual meaning.⁹ Supporting this view Julio de Santa Ana points out that the spiritual and material are also interconnected: "...according to scriptures, material poverty and spiritual poverty are interconnected, the latter being the result of the former."

Gort, however, admits that the Bible speaks of poverty in a literal, economic, social and political sense. Walter Kasper also insists upon this broad conception of the poor in Scripture: "Poor is taken in a very broad sense: it includes the helpless, those without resources, the oppressed, those in despair, the despised, the ill-tempered, the abused..."¹⁰

Poor in the Bible basically refers to people's physical condition. Hence poverty must be understood not only in a sense as a term applicable to the materially poor but also to those poor in spirit. The *poor in spirit* are those who because of their unjust condition in this world are dependent on, and have turned to, God. The term 'poor in spirit' does not refer to spiritual deadness and atheism, as many tend to interpret it. Gutierrez explains this even further. He states that, poverty in the Bible is a scandalous condition inimical to human dignity and therefore contrary to the will of God.¹¹

In this sense it has social, political and economic implications. Hence when God takes Israel as the focus of work, God consciously takes side with the poor and oppressed. When God addresses the deformation which human sin brought into the world, God begins with those suffering most deeply from greed, selfishness and the exercise of wrong dominion over others – Hebrew migrant labourers in Egypt. God rescues them from Pharaoh's oppression. 'Let my

⁸ J.D. GORT, Gospel For The Poor?, in *Missiology*, Vol. V11, number one, January 1979, p.328f.

⁹ For a more detailed discussion on wealth and poverty in the Old Testament see, HL BOSMAN, IGP GOUS & IJJ SPANGENBERG (Eds.), *Plutocrats and Paupers: Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament*, Pretoria: J L. Van Schaik (Pty) Ltd., 1991.

¹⁰ See JOHN STOTT, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, Great Britain: Camelot Press, 1986, p. 221.

¹¹ GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ, *Ibid.*, p. 291.

people go that they may serve me' (Ex. 3-5). God's deliverance of Israel focused and defined what God was doing in the world (Dt. 26:1-10). It identified some aspects of rebellion against God, for example, Pharaoh's ruthless oppression. It showed what God cared about - that all people together should be stewards of the resources of earth (Gen. 1:27-28; Ex.3:8) It demonstrated how God worked in the world to bring redemption – by choosing what was least, to shame human boasting (Deut. 7:7-8; 1Cor. 1:21-31).

John Stott observes a threefold division on the biblical concept of poverty.¹² Firstly, and economically speaking, there are the *indigent poor*, who are deprived of the basic necessities of life. Secondly, and sociologically and politically speaking, there are the *oppressed poor*, who are powerless victims of human injustice. Thirdly, and spiritually speaking, there are the *humble poor*, who acknowledge their helplessness in their dehumanised context and look to God alone for salvation. In each case God is represented as coming to them and making their cause his own, in keeping with his characteristic that he raises the poor from the dust. Stott, however, reduces these three categories to two, namely the material poverty of the destitute and powerless and the spiritual poverty of the humble and meek.¹³ God concerns himself with both. In both cases he raises the poor from the dust, but the biblical understanding of the poor is mostly defined in socio-political and economic terms.

Since the 1950's countless articles and books have shown us that the Bible defines and describes the poor mostly in economic and socio-political terms.¹⁴ In the Old Testament there are five Hebrew roots, producing verbs, nouns, adjectives, which are all used to describe poverty – what it is like, what causes it, what are its consequences.¹⁵ They all have different meanings. One

¹² JOHN STOTT, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, Camelot Press Ltd., Great Britain, p. 216.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-220.

¹⁴ Hence, I am not proposing to attempt anything new on this subject except to point out that a concern for the poor is rooted in biblical theology. Most of the WCC Publications on this subject have been put together in three volumes by JULIO DE SANTA ANA (ed.): *Good news to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the history of the Church*, WCC, Geneva, 1977. *Separation Without Hope: The Church and the Poor During the Industrial Revolution and Colonial Expansion*, WCC, Geneva, 1978. And *Towards a Church of the Poor*, WCC, Geneva, 1979. See also the other references in the footnotes of this chapter.

¹⁵ "Poverty was never something to which the prophets could be indifferent. When they spoke of it, they

stresses lack or inadequacy, and therefore need (*Chaser*: 2 Sam. 3:29; Amos 4:6; Prov. 12:9, 13:25; Job 30:3). Another means unequal, emptied out, impoverished, and therefore frail and weak (*Dal*: 2 Kings 24:14, Jer. 5:4, 1 Sam. 2:8). A third means poor because dispossessed (*Yarash*: Is. 42:22; Prov. 22:16; Ezek. 22:29, 31). Another denotes need and dependence, the poverty in which one needs to appeal for help (*Ebyon*: Job 29:15-16; 31:19-20, Is. 58:6-7, Deut. 15:11). The fifth means brought low, humbled, oppressed (*Ani*: Deut. 21; 14; 22:29; Jud. 19:24; Ps. 34:6; Job: 34:28).¹⁶ Together they give us the Biblical perspectives of poverty which lie behind Jesus' announcement of his ministry.¹⁷

The poor in the Old Testament, then, are those who lack or express want, those who are dispossessed or disinherited, those who are frail and weak, those who show need and dependence, and those who are oppressed. All of this brought about by social, political and economic inequalities. The biblical mandate given to the church is a concern for the poor.¹⁸ The church is called upon to resist structures and powers that dehumanise and oppress people. The church is called to work towards the comprehensive wellbeing of all human persons. This is what we have defined as development.

4.2.2 The New Testament

In the New Testament the poor replace Israel as the focus of the gospels. As the poor experience the good news of the 'kingdom', the real nature of the gospel becomes evident to others. The New Testament gives special attention to what that means in terms of children, women, Samaritans, social outcasts, the sick, the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel'

protested against the oppression and injustice of the rich and the mighty. Naturally, they found expressions consonant with their feelings". (Quoted in GELIN, *Poor*, p.19). See also GUILLERMO COOK, *The Expectation Of The Poor*, Op. Cit., p. 141.

¹⁶ For more details on the Poor in the Old Testament see PETER LEE, *Poor Man, Rich Man*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, pp. 50f. See also WILLEM NICOL'S paper, *The Churches In Southern Africa And The Poor- An Urgent Task*, Pretoria, 1986, pp. 5-9.

¹⁷ See RAYMOND FUNG'S article in, *Evangelism And The Poor: A Third World Study Guide*, VINAY SAMUEL and CHRIS SUDGEN (eds.), Oxford: Regnum Books, 1987, pp.28-31.

¹⁸ See again footnote 14 for the ecumenical challenge on this over the years.

Jesus was poor (Luke 2:24), but there is no reason to suppose He lived in abject poverty.¹⁹ As the eldest son, he would probably have inherited something from Joseph, and it appears that He used to pay the temple tax (Matt. 17:24). Some of his disciples were reasonably well-to-do (Mark 1:20) and he had some fairly wealthy friends (John 12:3). He and the Twelve, however shared a common purse (John 12:6). They were content to go without the comforts of home life (Luke 9:58), and yet found occasion for giving to the poor (John 13:29).

In the teaching of Jesus material possessions are not regarded as evil, but as dangerous. The poor are often shown in scripture to have an attitude of dependence upon God. It was to them that he came to preach the gospel (Luke 4:18; 7:22). A poor person's offering may be of much greater value than a rich person's (Mark 12:41-44). The poor must be shown hospitality (Luke 14:12-14), and given alms (Luke 18:22), though charity was to be secondary to worship (John 12:1-8). The early church made an experiment in the communal holding of wealth (Acts 2:41-42).

This led at first to attempts to eliminate poverty (Acts 4:34-35). Much of the ministry of Paul was concerned with raising money in the Gentile churches to assist the poor Christians in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-29; Galatians 2:10). These churches were also taught to provide for their own poor members (Romans 12:12).²⁰ James is especially vehement against those who allowed distinctions of wealth in the Christian Community (James 2:1-7). The poor were called by God and their salvation brought glory to him (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). The material wealth of the church of Laodicea was in sad contrast with her spiritual poverty (Revelation 3:17).

The most systematic exposition about poverty and wealth in the Epistles is found in 2 Corinthians 8, 9 where Paul sets the idea of Christian *charity* in the context of the gifts of God and especially that of his son who, 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich' (RSV). In light of that, running the risk of

¹⁹ A detailed discussion on the historical Jesus follows later in this Chapter.

²⁰ See JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Good news to the Poor*, pp. 12-54.

material poverty will lead to spiritual blessing, just as the apostles were poor but made many rich (2 Corinthians 6:10).

The Gospel writers tell us much about the poor. The evangelist Luke, in particular, seems to display great sensitivity to the theme of poverty. Since his views are not at variance with the rest of the New Testament we shall, therefore, attempt to briefly summarise his views on this subject.²¹

Many of Luke's special parables relate to money matters, examples, the two debtors, the rich fool, the tower builder, the lost coin, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus and the pounds. Those who are 'poor' and 'humble' are often the objects of the Saviour's mercy (6:20, 30; 15:11 ff.).

The Pharisees are called 'lovers of money' (16:4). John the Baptist, in Luke's account of his ministry, warns the tax-collectors against extortion and soldiers against discontent with their pay (3:13 ff.). At Nazareth, Jesus proclaims good tidings to the 'poor' (4:17-21). In the Magnificat the hungry are filled and the rich are sent away empty (1:53). In the Sermon on the Plain the first woe is directed against the rich, who are said to have received their consolation (4:24), and the first beatitude is addressed to the poor, without the qualification 'in spirit' as found in Matthew (cf Luke 6:20; Matthew 5:3). Luke's perception of poverty and wealth is best summed up in the following points:²²

- a) The Christian's concern about poverty and riches is part of his/her concern for, and dedication to the "kingdom of God". People who have a share in the 'kingdom', in the new creation, are made one and this oneness should express itself also in mutual material

²¹ For more on the NT. and the poor see J.P. CLODOVIS BOFF & JORGE PIXLEY, *The Bible, the Church and the Poor*, Great Britain: Burns & Oats Ltd, 1989, pp.53-67.

²² See PAUL B. DECOCK, Poverty and Riches in the Theology of Luke, in *Affluence, Poverty and the Word of God*, K. NÜRNBERGER (ed.), p.161. See also WILLEM NICOL, *The Churches In Southern Africa And The Poor- An Urgent Task*, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 1986, p13.

help. For Luke, the sharing of property among the believers is a manifestation of their *koinonia* and of the proleptic presence of the new creation.

- b) No one can have a share in the 'kingdom' unless she/he has made a radical choice for God, against mammon, that means that her/his hope is entirely in God and not in earthly possessions or human achievements. (Luke 16:13; 14:13).
- c) Luke is not concerned simply about the problem of world poverty, but he is definitely concerned about the salvation of the world, about the liberation from the power of evil (Acts 26:18; Luke 1:74-75). For Luke, and for the New Testament as a whole, liberation from the power of evil by Christ and conversion to Christ are the only ways to the 'kingdom' of the new creation, of which the *koinonia* is a fruit. Only through the coming of the 'kingdom' will we reach the stage where there will be no longer any needy person among us (Acts 4:34). For Luke, the preaching of the Good News is the key.

Thus the issue of poverty and wealth in the New Testament is not about economic relationships separate from the experience of the "Kingdom of God" or the proclamation of the gospel. The concept of poverty in the Gospels must not be interpreted too narrowly, that is as the spiritually poor (Matthew 5:3). In line with the Old Testament, poverty is associated with and even includes all kinds of physical distress.²³

In the Lucan beatitudes the poor are associated with those who are hungry and those who weep (Luke 6:21). As Jesus referred to their material needs he pointed them to the fact that God was on their side, and they should believe that as good news. According to Luke 6:20, the first beatitude is not a general statement about the way of salvation, but a word of promise directed to Jesus' disciples: "Happy are you poor". This agrees with the fact that the fourth beatitude in Luke 6:22 concerns those who suffer for the sake of the gospel.

²³ See EBEN SCHEFFLER, Good news for the Poor: How does the New Testament use the Old?, in *Plutocrats and Paupers: Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament*, Op. cit., pp. 96-107.

If poverty itself was the instrument of salvation, Jesus would surely not have allowed his followers to retain any wealth. Jesus did not object to the having of wealth. He however challenged the need to have more than you really need, especially at the expense of others. Zacchaeus, for example, only undertook to give away part of this wealth to which Jesus did not object. The Good News to the poor does not mean that the poor are not like all others called to “believe the Good News” as Jesus’ basic message is summarised in Mark 1:15. What is blessed by Jesus is poverty in the context of trust in God. Jesus did not, however, make it conditional that the poor should first come to faith before He was willing to proclaim to them that they are blessed. He proclaimed the Good News of God’s blessing to the poor to all of them in order that they may believe it. This is part of his message of free grace. God chose Israel not because they chose him. God chose Israel because of her oppression and exploitation.

Similarly, Jesus chose to come among the poor because of their exploitation and poverty experienced through the injustice and acquisitiveness of the powerful. Therefore Jesus could say, “Blessed are you poor for yours is the kingdom of God” (Matt.5:3). This implies that Jesus is already on the side of the poor because of their circumstance. Whilst he identifies with them he also points them to true faith and trust in him. There are numerous examples in the Bible where Jesus heals people even though they do not express faith in him (Matt. 9:1-8,32-34; 8; 16-17; 12: 9-14; 15: 29-31). For example, the story of the healing of the blind men points to the fact that these men did not really know Jesus. The use of the term “Son of David” indicates a political expression rather than a proper acknowledgement of the Messiah. However, this did not stop Jesus from healing them. When they later met Jesus again, this time they really know who he is and are shown to express faith. Hence we may understand Jesus’ concern for the poor because of their need for justice and righteousness. He reaches out to help the poor and in the process of doing so brings them to faith and trust in the God of justice.

Thus far we have merely discussed the New Testament perspective on poverty and wealth, bearing special reference to Luke’s views on this subject. Now we need to answer a more important question: Who are the poor in the New Testament?

In the New Testament the Greek term *ptochos* is used to speak of the poor person. It refers to one who has nothing and has no choice but to be a beggar. The poor were frequently without clothes, hungry, ill and sorrowful. Gutierrez states that “*ptochos*” refers to one who does not have what is necessary to subsist, the wretched one driven into begging.²⁴

Stegemann points out that the predominant use of “*ptochos*” in the New Testament for ‘poverty’ has its basis in the real-life situation of the people under discussions – they are desperately poor, wretched creatures who are fighting for their survival.²⁵

Luke identifies the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, as the poor. What is described in “*ptochos*” is poverty caused by oppression and exploitation.²⁶ This type of poverty is aligned to the “*Ani*” described in the Old Testament. This is the poor who Luke speaks about and this is the poor with whom Jesus identifies.

Stegemann makes a very useful comment here. He states that in most cases the terms for ‘poor’ in the New Testament are used in their original socio-economic sense, though they seem to appear in the metaphorical sense.²⁷ In the light of this, he identifies the poor in the New Testament with whom Jesus associated. They are:

- The sick (Luke 14:13, 21; 4:18-19; 7:22; Matthew 11:5; see also Gal. 4:9); (Mark 10: 46-52).
- The naked (Rev. 3:17; Mark 10:50; Luke 3:11; James 2:16; Matthew 5:40; 6:25).
- The hungry (Matthew 6:25; James 2:15-16) and
- The destitute (Mark 4:7; Matthew 25:35-36; Luke 16:20).²⁸

²⁴ *Ptochos* is used 34 times in the whole New Testament; in most cases it refers to the indigent person, one lacking what is necessary. Only on six occasions does this term have a spiritual meaning, but even then the poor person is found at the side of the blind, the mutilated, the leper, and the sick, providing a very immediate concrete context. (see GUTIERREZ, Op.cit., p.292.)

²⁵ W. STEGEMANN, *The Gospel And The Poor*, Ibid., p.14.

²⁶ Stegemann points out that the term *ptochos* is used in the same breath with others that collectively refer to the plight of the poor” one who is wretched, pitiable, blind and naked (Ibid., p.15.)

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.16-21.

As we have shown, the New Testament also indicates a concern for the poor. This is clearly evidenced in the ministry of Jesus as he identified with the poor and the oppressed. The early church attempted to follow its Lord's example. However, as we have shown in Chapter Three the church slowly started to lose such a concern for the poor but small groups of Christians remained faithful in maintaining this focus in their charity, welfare, acts of Christian love and since the 1960's in development.²⁹ The biblical focus on the poor is finding greater resurgence today. In the light of that we ask: Who are the poor today?

4.3 WHO ARE THE POOR TODAY?

The Melbourne Conference (1980) pointed out the difficulty of determining who the poor are today.³⁰ It stated that our difficulty comes from the fact that, although we live on the same globe, we come from different situations, and speak of different characteristics of poverty (context). Part of our difficulty comes from the fact that, although we serve a common Lord and share a common faith, we read the scriptures in different ways and emphasise different aspects of our understanding of the "kingdom of God" (content).

Nevertheless, numerous attempts have been made to define the poor today. Gutierrez states that the 'poor' person today is the oppressed one, the one marginalised from society, the member of the proletariat struggling for his or her most basic rights; he or she is the exploited and plundered social class, the country struggling for its liberation.³¹ According to Moltmann, the poor intended by the scriptures are:

...all those who have to endure acts of violence and injustice without being able to defend themselves. The poor are all who have to exist physically and spiritually on the fringe of death, who have nothing to live for and to whom life has nothing to offer.³²

²⁹ See again footnote 14.

³⁰ See *International Review of Mission, Melbourne Reports/ Reflections*, October/January 1980/81, p.390.

³¹ GUTIERREZ, Op. cit., p.301.

³² J. MOLTSMANN, *A Theology of Hope*, London: SCM Press, 1967, p.16.

The Consultation on World Evangelisation (COWE) also gives us a good basis to determine who the poor are today. The *COWE* report concludes:

The poor refers to the manual worker who struggles to survive on a day to day basis, the destitute cowering as a beggar; the one reduced to meekness, the one brought low... those weak and tired from carrying heavy burdensthe majority of references indicate that the poor are the mercilessly oppressed, the powerless, the destitute and the downtrodden...³³

The Melbourne Conference has provided us with a simple definition in one of its papers: "*To be poor is to have not (the basic material needs), to experience lack and deficiency..... the poor are the 'little ones' (Matt. 11:25), the insignificant people of no consequence*".³⁴ They are powerless, voiceless and at the mercy of the powerful. The dynamics of being poor are such that the oppressed poor finally accept their inhumanity and humiliation of their situation; they therefore accept the status quo as the normal course of life. Thus, to be poor becomes both a state of things and an attitude of life, an outlook, even a world-view. To be poor then is not only to have a low or no income, worse, it is to be powerless.

Generally speaking then, the poor are the socially, politically and economically oppressed and deprived people. They are as Sarah White classifies them, "the involuntary" poor.³⁵ They are poor because of systemic injustice where all the wealth is kept in the hands of the wealthy and powerful. The bible, however, also speaks about another kind of poverty which can be classified as the "voluntary" poor.³⁶ These are not the materially poor but they choose to live as Jesus did. A notable example of this type can be seen in Luke 18:18-27.

³³ See *Evangelism and the Poor: A Third World Study Guide*, Op. cit., p.2.

³⁴ See *International Review Of Mission*, Ibid., p.391.

³⁵ SARAH WHITE & ROMY TIONGCO, *Doing Theology and Development: Meeting the Challenge of Poverty*, Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press, 1997, p. 88.

³⁶ Ibid.

This reading in Luke is only one of several so-called hard sayings of Jesus. It turned on its head the assumption that since prosperity was the sign of God's blessing, the wealthy were best placed to enter the "Kingdom of God". Instead, Jesus' warnings against wealth are loud and clear. Aware of this then there are those who, possessing riches, are prepared to live a life of frugality, or self denial, in order to make responsible use of these riches. For example, in the Catholic tradition this is termed 'evangelical poverty', and is usually reserved for a select few who have the vocation to join religious orders such as monks and nuns. The problem is that while they might own nothing as individuals, the communities to which they belong were often very rich. This limited their capacity to be with the poor, as they might not suffer any material hardship or insecurity.

Others make a more radical option, choosing to live amongst the poor and share fully in these circumstances of their lives. They may not be politically active, but their lives proclaim a living question against the choice to have more at the cost of others having less. For others this goes as far as solidarity with the poor in which they voluntarily give up their wealth and security to join themselves with the poor in order to struggle against the poverty produced by injustice.³⁷ However, such people cannot be really described as poor. They certainly may have the option to reverse their choice whereas the real poor have no such choice.

The final element in our response to poverty complements and expands on this. It is the interior orientation of being poor in spirit. The emphasis here is not on material poverty, but on an inner attitude of detachment from wealth and success, to guard against being possessed by our possessions or driven by our drive to achieve. Paul's letter to the Philippians provides a lead in this:

Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going

³⁷ Ibid., pp.391-392.

hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The Bible does not exclusively define the poor as the hungry and materially deprived. However it is not wrong to stress this fact since the majority of the biblical references to the poor describes the poor as the oppressed and deprived, not in a spiritual sense but in a material way. The most authentic biblical definition then of the poor today is: *They who suffer economic, political and social oppression and exploitation*. This is the definition this study uses when referring to the poor.

4.4 WHO ARE THE POOR IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY?

In their landmark study on poverty more than a decade ago, Francis Wilson and Mampela Ramphele showed the multi-dimensional faces of poverty in South Africa.³⁸ In tracing the many faces³⁹ and causes⁴⁰ of poverty in South Africa they were able to state that children, women, the elderly and disabled are the most vulnerable in our country.

The more recent *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa Report (1998)* states that though South Africa is an upper-middle-income country yet most of its 'households is of outright poverty or of continuing vulnerability to being poor.'⁴¹ Many households still have unsatisfactory access to education, health care, energy and clean water. Poverty in our country is characterised by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. Poverty is perceived by poor South Africans

³⁸ F. WILSON & M. RAMPHELE, *Uprooting Poverty: A South African Challenge*, Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1989.

³⁹ On the faces of poverty see their sections on Earth, fire and water, work, unemployment, hunger and sickness, housing, and literacy and learning, in Part One (Ibid., pp. 13-151).

⁴⁰ The unique cause of poverty in South Africa can be attributed to the racist apartheid policy. See WILSON & RAMPHELE, Ibid., p.4.

⁴¹ JULIAN MAY (Ed.), *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: Report prepared for the Office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality*, Summary Report, 13 May, 1998, p.2.

themselves to include alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are secure and adequately paid, and fragmentation of the family.⁴² In contrast, wealth is perceived to be characterised by good housing, the use of gas or electricity, and ownership of major durable goods such as a television set or fridge.

The *Report* speaks about the extent and distribution of poverty in South Africa. It establishes that just under 50% of the South African population (about 19 million people) can be defined as poor.⁴³ It states that although poverty is not confined to any one race group, yet in South Africa it is concentrated among blacks, particularly Africans: 61% of Africans and 38% of Coloureds are poor, compared with 5% of Indians and 1% of Whites.

In the light of this information of poverty in South Africa, who are the poor? The poor in South Africa are the economically deprived, the struggling pensioner, the lowly paid who suffer from day to day, the victims of apartheid whose lives have not yet improved, the women and children who are still struggling to be heard, the unemployed, the mentally and physically disabled, the sick who cannot afford even the basic medical treatment (including the Aids sufferer), those especially in the rural areas who do not have basic and essential provisions: water, electricity and sanitation facilities - the homeless, street children, orphans, the abused, exploited and the neglected in society.

The poor in South Africa today are the economically, socially, culturally and politically deprived and dominated ones. The ones who have a very little say in life because they are exploited by the rich and powerful. They are the neglected and forgotten ones. According to Nash, poverty in South Africa means:⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., p.3.

⁴³ These are people who are unable to attain a minimal standard of living, measured in terms of basic consumption needs or the income required to satisfy them.

⁴⁴ M. NASH (Ed.), *Rural Poverty challenges the Church: Report of a Northern Transvaal Churches' Workshop and Background Material*, Johannesburg: SACC, 1984, pp.9-10. Although this is an older source I prefer the vivid picture it paints to describe the poor in South Africa.

- pregnant women so weakened by malnutrition that their babies are stillborn or die very soon after birth;
- small children with swollen bellies, sores oozing pus, faces wisened and drawn like those of old people;
- the gnawing ravenous hunger of the semi-starved;
- the aching anxiety of wondering where the next meal will come from;
- the pain of watching a granny waste away on a diet of weak tea because what little food there is must go to the children;
- the fear of being asked to share food with kinsfolk or neighbours when every scrap is needed for your own immediate family.

And in time of drought poverty means:

- thirst and the daily desperate search for water;
- trekking from 3.00am to 6.00am to a distant borehole;
- queuing and waiting for many wearisome hours (for example, food parcels);
- sometimes having literally to fight for a share of the meagre trickle;
- trudging back in the heat with the precious but burdensome load;
- and repeating the process next day and the day after, for weeks and months with no end in sight.

Having defined who the poor are, we are left with yet another question, posed in the beginning: Is it valid to assert that the gospel is for the poor?

4.5 GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR

Throughout its history the church has given a great deal of attention in one form or another to the poor. Particularly during the Middle Ages enormous amounts of money, goods and possessions were given for charity and works of benevolence. Gort, however questions the integrity of this,

were given for charity and works of benevolence. Gort, however questions the integrity of this, pointing out that the church had succored the oppressed on a very large scale.⁴⁵ He nevertheless, affirms that the church has always shown a concern for the poor.

It is therefore, true to say that the Christian community has always had an awareness that the Gospel is for the poor even though it was obscured at times.⁴⁶ But it is equally true to also point out that in its understanding the church also spiritualised and allegorised the biblical meaning of the poor. Many scriptural terms, for example, were given an exclusively “personalistic” or symbolic meaning by preachers and biblical scholars. The oppressed of Luke 4:18 were those downtrodden by guilt, the captives those imprisoned by sin, the poor the spiritually destitute. So, when the church professed – as it always has – that the Gospel is for the poor, what it also implied was that it was a Gospel for the poor sinner.

Gort states that this spiritualising, truncating interpretation which has persisted up to present times is increasingly being called into question.⁴⁷ He points out that the proponents of Black and liberation theology have quite rightly argued against the allegorising tendency in the church’s biblical exegesis. They point out that when Jesus said he has come “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18), he meant exactly that – literally.⁴⁸ Hence when they proclaim that the Gospel is for the poor, they mean that it also has implications – literal implications – for the destitute in their poverty, for the destitution of the poor. It follows then that God takes a definite stand with the poor. Archbishop Tutu expresses the latter view in the following comment:

God is not neutral. Biblical evidence show us that God has a preferential option for the poor and oppressed, he deliberately chose as his friends, not bishops’ and canons’ and

⁴⁵ In J.D. GORT, *Gospel for the Poor?* Op.cit., p.329.

⁴⁶ We have already shown this in the previous Chapter.

⁴⁷ J. D. GORT, *Ibid.*, p.327.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

deans' company - No, His companions were the sinners, the prostitutes, the traitors, the scum of society; the sick who desperately needed a physician and knew it.

Yes, the God Jesus came to proclaim he was no neutral sitter on the fence. He took the side of the oppressed, the poor, the exploited, not because they were holier or morally better than their oppressors. No, he was on their side simply and solely because they were oppressed. Yes, this was the good news Jesus came to proclaim – that God was the liberator, the one who set free the oppressed and the poor and exploited. He set them free from all that would make them less than he wanted them to be, fully human persons as free as Jesus Christ showed Himself to be.⁴⁹

It is quite apparent, as we have shown in Chapter Three, that the church has always concerned herself with the poor, irrespective of how she understood her involvement with them. The WCC conference at Melbourne also realised the significance of relating mission to the poor. This conference also stated in no uncertain terms that mission must have as its priority a concern for the poor. The following statement summarises the view adopted at Melbourne:

The church of Jesus Christ is called to preach Good News to the poor, even as its Lord had done in his ministry announcing the kingdom of God. The churches cannot neglect this evangelistic task. Most of the world's people are poor, and they are awaiting for a witness to the Gospel that will really be Good News

The mission which is conscious of the kingdom will be concerned for liberation, not oppression, justice, not exploitation, fullness not deprivation, freedom, not slavery; health, not disease; life, not death. No matter how the poor may be identified, this mission is for them.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ BONGANJALO GOBA, A Theological Tribute to Archbishop Tutu, in *Hammering Swords into Ploughshares: Essays in Honour of Archbishop Mpilo Desmond Tutu*, B. TLHAGALE & I. MOSALA (eds.), Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers: 1986, p65.

⁵⁰ *International Review of Missions* (I.R.M.), Melbourne Reports/Reflections, .394.

Gort, however, cautions us on placing too great an emphasis on the gospel as being 'particularly addressed to the poor.'⁵¹ He asserts that the gospel also addresses the rich.⁵² Nash explains how the gospel addresses both the poor and the rich: "For the poor it is a message of hope and of encouragement to go on struggling for a better alternative: for the rich it is a warning and a challenge, as many gospel passages testify."⁵³

The gospel, is of course, for all and not only the poor.⁵⁴ But God is a personal God who addresses himself to each one of us personally, each in his/her own situation. So Melbourne said (Section 1.4):

To the poor this challenge means the profound assurance that God is with them and for them. To the rich it means the profound repentance and renunciation. To all (both rich and poor) who yearn for justice and forgiveness, Jesus Christ offers discipleship, and the demand of service.⁵⁵

Whilst we have agreed that the gospel is not only addressed to the poor, yet we must point out that the gospel particularly favours the poor (Prov.14: 31, 19:17; Matt. 25: 35-36, 40; Luke 2:24 2 Cor.8:9;). In the Old Testament God always pronounces compassion upon the side of the afflicted and poor and will never forsake them in their desperate search for relief and justice (Is. 41:17). This is the special message of Good News God has for the poor. The rich are however attacked for oppressing the poor (Ps. 10; Jer. 5: 26-29, 22:13-19; Isa. 3: 14-25, James 5: 3-5), and for also neglecting them (Is. 1: 10-17; Luke 6: 33-36; 1John 3: 17-18). Noordmans thus points out that in any situation in which there is a question of conflict between the rich and poor,

⁵¹ GORT, Op.cit., p.345.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ M. NASH, Ibid., p 11.

⁵⁴ See for example, JERIE LE ROUX, God also Loves the Rich: An Allegorical reading of the Old Testament, in *Plutocrats and Paupers*, Op. cit., pp. 85-95.

⁵⁵ I.R.M., Ibid., p.395.

the Lord will never choose for the rich but always the poor.⁵⁶ Julio de Santa Ana attempts to explain why God sides with the poor:

The reason for the privilege of the poor lies neither in their material circumstances nor in their spiritual disposition, but in the way in which God conceives the exercise of his kingdom: 'Blessed are the poor, not because they are better than others, or better prepared to receive the Kingdom which is to come, but because God seeks to make his kingdom a tangible manifestation of his justice and love for the poor, the suffering and those who live in misery.'⁵⁷

If such is the case, then Good News to the poor must always be a missionary strategy of the church. It is also a formula for renewal and faithfulness of the Christian church. Jon Sobrino supports this claim. He states that when the poor are at the centre of the church, they give direction and meaning to everything that legitimately and necessarily constitutes the concrete church, its preaching and activity, its administration, its cultural, dogmatic, theological, and other structures.⁵⁸ This happens when the poor are given the freedom and equality of participation in the church.

The poor in no sense causes a 'reduction' of ecclesial reality but rather are a source of 'concretisation' for everything ecclesial. For far too long the Christian church has adopted a paternalistic attitude toward the poor as it favoured the rich within its structures and leadership. The poor show us truly what the church ought to be. To start with, the poor is to begin where God, in Christ, has already begun. Jesus began his ministry with the poor. He consciously sided with the oppressed and exploited in his day, as we shall see in the next section. He related the coming "Kingdom of God" to the establishment of justice, peace and righteousness. Therefore, we submit that mission today must take under its umbrella an immediate concern for the poor.

⁵⁶ NOORDMANS, *Zondaar en Bedelaar*, Amsterdam, 1946, p.23.

⁵⁷ JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Good News to the Poor*, Op. cit., p.38.

⁵⁸ JON SOBRINO, *The True Church And The Poor*, Op. Cit., p.94.

4.6 WHY 'THE POOR'?

The Bible is full of references to riches and poverty, to those who are wealthy and those who are poor. And as we have already shown, these references express different attitudes and understandings for example that poverty is caused by idleness (Proverbs 6:11; 28:19) and that wealth is a sign of virtue and God's blessing (Psalm 1). Therefore, to choose any particular context or people is to raise the question, why this one rather than that?

The context that we have chosen is that of the poor. Hence, we shall now propose to examine a few other reasons as to why it is so important to have our mission priority geared towards the poor. First it was Jesus himself who established a clear link between the coming of the 'Kingdom' and the proclamation of the Good News to the poor. To start with the poor is to begin where God, in Christ, has already begun. The incarnate Christ, born in a stable, identified with the weak and the poor. He consciously chose sides with the poor and oppressed and not with the rich and powerful.

Whilst saying the above, I am mindful of the disputes that have been raised over the centuries concerning the historical Jesus. Much has been written about the historical Jesus.⁵⁹ New Testament scientists have been searching for the historical Jesus for more than two hundred years. Starting with Reimarus, the first quest lasted about 150 years, the second one only a few decades, the third one continues and some even see a fourth in process. In spite of all these efforts we have never succeeded in really pinpointing the historical Jesus. The moment we think we recognise him, he eludes us and becomes a stranger again. Addressing this view C.W du Toit

⁵⁹ The literature on the historical Jesus is extensive. I refer you to some of the more recent works: The principal books of the Jesus Seminar include MARCUS BORG, *Jesus: A New Vision*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991; *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994; JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN, *The Historical Jesus*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992; *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995; CROSSAN with RICHARD WATTS, *Who is Jesus?*, New York: Harper Paperbacks, 1996; ROBERT FUNK, *Honest to Jesus*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996; ROBERT W. FUNK, ROY W. HOOVER, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

writes:⁶⁰

Perhaps the real problem is not that Jesus is eluding us, but we are eluding him. It may be that his person, his self-understanding, his claim, his offer, his demand is too overwhelming for our historical methods to deal with. Therefore we evade him by trying to cut him down to size; we squeeze him into our own neat little mental boxes, pretending that our categories are *the* categories: the Jesus of rationalism, Jesus the revolutionary, the romantic Jesus, the moralistic Jesus, the Jesus of consistent eschatology, Jesus the Jew, Jesus the wisdom teacher, Jesus the eschatological prophet, Jesus the wandering cynic, Jesus the charismatic, Jesus the first-century Mediterranean peasant.

Martin Köhler in addressing the complexities involved in the quest for the historical Jesus points out that only the Christ *proclaimed* ('gepredigt') in the Bible is what really matters.⁶¹ With this view in mind we shall attempt to prove the point that Jesus identified with the poor.

Jesus himself arose from the lower ranks of society and came from a hill town in Galilee (John 1:46). Luke presents Jesus as coming into humble surroundings. Mary and Joseph were unable to obtain lodging in Bethlehem at the inn in spite of their tiresome journey and Mary's advanced pregnancy. They were compelled by the overcrowded conditions to seek shelter in the stable. It was here that Jesus is said to have been born, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and laid in a manger (Luke 2:7). Luke underscores the theme of poverty by suggesting that the offering for purification made by Mary and Joseph at the Jerusalem temple was a "pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons"; this was the offering prescribed by the law for those too poor to afford a lamb (Luke 2:24; cf. Lev. 12: 6-8).

When Jesus left the carpenter's bench to become a rabbi, a teacher in Israel, his economic

⁶⁰ C.W. DU TOIT, *Images of Jesus*, Research Institute for Theology and Religion, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997, p.3.

⁶¹ See A G VAN AARDE, The Continued Importance of Jesus, in *Images of Jesus*, C. W DU TOIT(ed.), pp. 1-26.

condition did not improve, since rabbis received no remuneration for their instruction. It was probably no idle figure of speech when Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Luke 9: 58; Mat. 8: 20). Perhaps Jesus was reflecting his conscious position to be among the poor.

Jesus may have begun by following John's example and baptising people in the Jordan (John 3:22- 6).⁶² If so, he soon gave up this practice (Jn. 4:1-3). He did not feel called to save Israel by bringing everyone to a baptism of repentance in the Jordan. He decided that something else was necessary, something which had to do with the poor, the sinners and the sick - the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus made his purpose in coming to earth abundantly clear when he took the scroll in the Nazareth synagogue and read from Isaiah 61: 1-2:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Then Jesus said, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Hence, it can be seen that the focus of Jesus' attention came to rest on those disfranchised by society; he was derided as a friend of tax collectors and sinners, but replied that " those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners (Mark 2:13-17; Matt. 9: 9-13; Luke 5:27-32; cf. Luke 7: 34, 15: 1-2).

Consequently, Jesus directed his ministry to the economically, politically and socially deprived and oppressed. Included in this category are: the poor, the blind, the lame, the crippled, the lepers, the hungry, the miserable (those who weep), sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors, demoniacs (those possessed by unclean spirits), the persecuted, the downtrodden, the captives,

⁶² See A. G VAN AARDE, The 'third quest' for the historical Jesus- where should it begin: With Jesus' relationship to the Baptist, or with the nativity traditions? In *Neotestamentica* 29 (2), pp. 325-356.

all who labour and are overburdened, the rabble who know nothing of the law, the crowds, the little ones, the least, the last and the babes or the lost sheep of the house of Israel.⁶³ The reference here is to a well-defined and unmistakable section of the population. Jesus generally refers to them as the poor or the little ones. Today some might refer to this section of the population as the lower classes; others would call them the oppressed.

Those to whom Jesus announced the good news and the way he announced it to them were as important as the content of the good news. Furthermore, Jesus did not witness to God's life by joining hands with the powerful and mighty, though he did not reject those who turned to him in repentance and faith. However, he associated himself with, and concentrated his ministry upon the powerless and oppressed.⁶⁴ As already pointed out, the announcement of his birth was linked with the hope of the poor and disenfranchised (Luke 1:51 ff.). He was born in a stable (Luke 2:8) and his parents could only afford to fulfill the requirements of the Hebrew law with the offering assigned to the poor (Luke 2:24; Lev. 12:8). He was a despised Galilean (Mark 1:9,14; John 1:46); he also identified himself with the Samaritans (Luke 10:30 ff.; cf. 21 – 28; 38 – 41; John 4:7-42).

Jesus called the poor the heirs of the kingdom (Luke 6:20) and saw in the vulnerability of children one of its clearest sign (Matt. 18:3; 19:13-14; Luke 18:17). Indeed he located his own mission among the poor, the captives, the sick and the oppressed (Luke 4:18). Hence, He described the gospel as especially good news for the poor. He announced, demonstrated and implemented the good news by identification and solidarity with the poor. For Jesus there was no such thing as an understanding of the good news intended without its relation to the poor. The gospel and the poor were integrally related in the announcement and activity of Jesus. That is why even those who were rich, to whom this good news was announced, had to approximate to the poor who receive it (e.g. the rich, young ruler). This biblical perspective confronts the view

⁶³ ALBERT NOLAN, *Jesus Before Christianity*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, pp. 27-29.

⁶⁴ LESSE LUTABINGWA, The Challenge Of Mission In Christ's Way, in *I.R.M.* Vol. LXXVII, NUMBER 308, P.524.

that the poor need the generosity of the wealthy as endless receivers of aid. Rather the wealthy need the poor, to learn from them the nature and meaning of the deliverance God brings to both. The basis of the sharing is when those separated by distorted relationships discover that they both equally need each other. Only Jesus Christ can bring this about. For Jesus, true religious commitment was measured not by mere words or outward observances, but rather by one's inward attitude towards God and one's concrete action on behalf of the neighbour.⁶⁵ Therefore, we must say that to take Jesus seriously is to also take the poor seriously. To engage in mission is to be involved with the poor. Marcella Hoesl supports this view in the following comment:

The kingdom is not to be found in great wonder or power. It is discovered in all who commit themselves to the poor, in those who suffer injustice and persecution, in persons who experience hunger, thirst and all manner of deprivation. The kingdom is found in all who struggle in love for justice that there may be life.⁶⁶

The ministry of Jesus provided in a specific way the sign of the arrival of the 'kingdom'. His proclamation of the 'kingdom' was the declaration that the reign of God was one in which mercy and acceptance would win out over the forces of evil in the world. Jesus saw a radical change taking place in the existing social order. The demands of the 'kingdom' were radical because its coming required one to evaluate life in terms of mercy, not might- either political or economic. The apocalyptic thrust of Jesus' message is seen in his teaching that the 'kingdom' would be accompanied by a reversal of the existing social order. The respected in society would reject and in turn be excluded from the 'kingdom', while the poor and sinners would be admitted into membership. This also carried with it the understanding that the economic structure would be subjected to reform, to be brought about by God's power. The ministry of Jesus itself was a sign of this turning of the tables, when the poor would be privileged and the rich excluded. This theology of reversal is especially apparent in Luke, but is present in the other Gospels as well. Many would come from east and west, north and south, to sit down at the table in the "Kingdom

⁶⁵ PETER LEE, *Op. cit.*, p.111.

⁶⁶ MARCELLA HOESL, *The Kingdom: Preferential Option For The Poor*, in *Missiology*, Vol.10, 1982, p.62.

of God”, there to dine with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets; while those Jews who were heirs would be thrust out (Luke 13:26-30; Matt. 8:11-12). This theme of economic reversal is vividly portrayed in the parables of the rich man, Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31). It is also found in Jesus’ sayings about the first shall be last (Matt.19: 30; Mark10: 31; Luke 13:30); he who humbles himself will be exalted (Luke 14:11, 18:14); whoever attempts to save his life will lose it (Luke 17:33). Life in the ‘kingdom’ would be the opposite of that expected: “Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves” (Luke 22:26). It can be seen from all this that Jesus definitely sided with the poor and the oppressed. Hence, the mission of the church must also be directed in the example of her Lord.

Secondly, there is much talk today about reaching the ‘unreached’ with the gospel. The Consultation on World Evangelisation (Cowe) at Pattaya in 1980, paid particular attention to this theme. Moreover, it was affirmed here that most of the ‘unreached’ people of the world today are poor. Raymond Fung also supports this claim.⁶⁷ He states that world evangelisation today requires working among the poor, the poor of the earth; peasants and labourers and their families who live in slums and work in the fields. For us, this implies that poverty and not conversion should be the focus of the church.

Donald McGavran also calls for the establishment of Christian churches amongst the poor, though for different reasons. His primary interest is in church growth through mass conversion. Be that as it may then, one fact still remains; the majority of the unreached people are the world’s poor. Therefore, this gives us reason enough as to why our mission priority should be geared towards the poor. Such a priority requires identifying with the poor and taking up their cause for justice and righteousness, as Jesus did.

Thirdly, the poor gives us the most authentic expression of God and His message. Given the nakedness of their situation they have a lot to tell us about God, about the Bible, about the church and its mission. Jon Sobrino points out that by their material and historical situation they are in

⁶⁷ RAYMOND FUNG, *Mission in Christ’s Way*, I.R.M. Vol. XXVII, number 309, January 1989, p.25.

the best position to understand what the Good News is about. Moreover he asserts that the Spirit is present in the poor *Ex Opere Operato*, though this in no way means simply that with the poor as members the church will come to exist as the authentic Church. What it does mean is that the Spirit manifests itself in the poor and that they are therefore structural channels for finding the truth of the church and the direction and content of its mission. To put it differently, the church of the poor is not automatically the agent of the truth and grace because the poor are in it, rather the poor in the church are the structural source that assures the church of being really the agent of truth and justice. We must, however, point out that it is not our intention to romanticise the poor. The voice of the poor is not the voice of God, only that theirs is the voice that God hears, theirs is a cry that God listens to. The poor are the recipients of the good news as well as its messenger. Julio de Santa Ana explains this point well:

Because the poor judge the wrong ways of the powerful and rich, calling them to repentance, because they are the bearers of hope, because they bring change into historical reality, and because they provide signs of the kingdom of God, it is possible to affirm that they are heralds of the gospel. (de Santa Ana, *Ibid.*, p.39.)

Hence, our mission today can only become the mission of God when it is engaged with the poor. To be concerned with God's mission is to be involved with God's people: *the poor*. They are the people that God, in Christ, identifies with. Marcella Hoesl supports this view stating that we hear the message better when we find our place beside the poor, when we share the good news together. These people and events give us the message of the "Kingdom" together. Moltmann asserts that Jesus is "already hidden in the world now in the present - in the least of this brethren - the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned. He, therefore, calls the church to be present among the poor. The church is called to break down oppressive structures that dehumanise people and to create a new society based on justice and equity.

4.7 CONCLUSION

One cannot minister to the poor without taking seriously the context in which they are found. If the conditions of the poor are to change, then it is necessary that the church attempts to address those living conditions. Such will no doubt require the establishment of a new society. This is what we refer to as development.

The biblical challenge is not only to identify the needs of the poor but to also address these needs relevantly with the gospel message. Such requires making the needs of the poor to become our needs as well. The church is challenged to seek the transformation of individuals and society to reflect the reign of God on earth. The church does this by relevantly addressing human needs. If the church in South Africa is to assume its biblical concern for the poor, then it must be involved in the social transformation of the country.

Having defined who the poor are and having examined reasons as to why we should gear our mission priorities towards the poor, we shall now (in the next chapter) seek to see how two different churches are attempting to transform the lives and communities of the poor.

CHAPTER FIVE : CHURCHES DOING DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapters 2 and 3 we attempted to show that the Christian Church has always had a notion of development. In Chapter Four by examining the biblical understanding of the poor we attempted to address the second part of this thesis that *undergirding this notion is a theology of development that the church has not fully understood or adequately embraced*. This chapter continues to examine the latter point, its primary task is to identify some of the theological themes that constitute a theology of development.

In order to achieve that we shall (1) do context analysis of two local communities to ascertain their needs (2) see how two churches are addressing these needs within the community (3) identify some of the theological themes embedded in the ministry of these churches and (4) offer a critique of some of the theories of development that are used from the perspective of a people-centred development.

However, as we proceed to achieve these objectives it is important to point out that the case studies have limitations.¹ Firstly, it is limited to a single church in each of the researched contexts. Secondly, it focuses mostly on the work of these two churches and its members and not the entire community. Thirdly, even though the information was gathered from the full church community the pastor and leaders offered much of the input. Given these limitations, the fact that these case studies are examples of poor churches doing development within their own communities helps to fulfill the aim of this chapter.

¹ In this chapter we will also use the interviews conducted with pastors which are attached as Appendices 3 A, B & C. The limitations on the use of these are found in Chapter 1, p.12 .

5.2 CASE STUDY ONE: THE ISIPINGO FARM COMMUNITY

In analysing this community we will attempt to outline the major economic and social problems encountered in a community regarded as sub-economic and in that way "poor". The Indian community studied- Isipingo Farm- would rank as a "very low-middle" status group within the spectrum of socio-economic differentiation in the city of Durban as a whole.² It is by no means the most disadvantaged area in the city. Most African townships, especially those in the rural areas and a good few Indian suburbs are considerably worse off in material terms. However, in many ways our area of study in general would conform broadly with the socio-economic conditions typical of most poor communities in South Africa.

5.2.1 Geographical Background

Isipingo Farm is commonly known as "Malakazi". However, the title deeds refer to the area as Isipingo Farm, and it is this name that we use in order to avoid confusion with the adjacent African spontaneous settlement of Malakazi.

The Isipingo River in the North, the Umbogintwini River in the South and Main Road 197 in the East bounds Isipingo Farm. On the western side the area is contiguous to the African settlement area of Malakazi, the boundary of the KwaZulu 'homeland' separating the two. The area was originally part of colonial land granted to Dick King, from whose estate the first Indian settlers purchased land in 1874. More recently, Isipingo Farm fell under the jurisdiction of the Isipingo Health Committee until it was amalgamated with the Borough of Amanzimtoti in 1962, when Indian group areas were declared at Isipingo Beach and Isipingo Rail. In 1972 the autonomous Indian controlled Borough of Isipingo was established, comprising Isipingo Beach, Isipingo Rail and Isipingo Hills, but not the new industrial area of Prospecton which remained in White controlled Amanzimtoti.

² Information provided by the Town Clerk of Isipingo.

In January 1974, Isipingo Farm was declared a released area in terms of the Bantu Trust and Land Act No. 18/1936 so as to enable the South African Bantu Trust to acquire land for ultimate incorporation into KwaZulu. The plan was to expand the African township of Umlazi southwards and to construct hostels in the area for single African men. After this declaration, Indian landowners at Isipingo Farm were approached to sell to the Trust, but all declined.

In August 1975 the jurisdiction of Isipingo Farm was transferred from Amanzimtoti to Isipingo. Isipingo Farm is 205 hectares in extent. In the early days of Indian settlement it was a cane-growing area. Later, however, sugar cane gave way to market gardening, and vegetables and sub-tropical fruit were produced for the Durban market. Eventually, the farming units became fragmented and uneconomic over the years and the area became increasingly residential in character.

5.2.2 Problems within the Community

Isipingo Farm and its community have experienced numerous problems over the years, which have had a decisive influence on the ministry of the church. For the purpose of our study, we shall here restrict ourselves to the more essential problems, which affect ministry in this community.

5.2.2.1 Housing

Housing obviously dominates the perception of problems. The reasons of unhappiness in the area support the importance of housing as a problem. A census count of squatter-type dwellings undertaken at Isipingo Farm revealed that there were 411 structures containing 522 dwelling units and a population of 3 883 persons. Over 95% of the households in the sample were tenants, although 59% owned the dwelling in which they were living - such dwelling was usually on a "tenancy-at-will" basis. This has for long been a common arrangement among Indians in Natal; the tenant pays a charge (monthly or annual) for the occupancy of a site on which she/he then

erects a dwelling. At Isipingo Farm the contracts were usually verbal or implied, but were nevertheless regarded as providing reasonable security of tenure.

All housewives interviewed by the team³ declared themselves to be dissatisfied with their present accommodation. Dominant as reasons for this dissatisfaction were factors relating to poor quality houses, overcrowding of houses and the neighbourhood. What is the objective conditions? The average size of household is 5,5 persons. Almost 50% of households have above 7 persons. As many as 63% of households accommodate more than 4 persons per room used for sleeping (under the circumstances, not only bedrooms are used for sleeping purposes).

Needless to say, with this kind of occupancy per room, the accepted standards of sex-separation cannot be maintained. There is no privacy for either private or family life. Neither is there room for healthy recreation, rest or study. The youth live on the streets and only come to sleep in the house - if they do.

Crowding exists not only within families, but within property sub-divisions as well. From our sample results it would appear that close to 51% of properties have more than one individual household residing on it (25% have 3 or more households; 14% have 5 or more households and 9% of properties in our sample had about 13 households or more). When asked whether anyone in the household would like to or needed to move to alternative accommodation, the majority of the people claimed that this was the case; also expressing a desire for single family unit accommodation (i.e. separate houses). People wanting alternative accommodation had spent a long time in a fruitless search; over 60% of these people have been looking for four years or more. Clearly the housing shortage bears heavily upon the community. In analysing the accommodation, among reasons for the households having left their previous dwellings to move into Isipingo Farm, the following were given by the team:

³ All references to 'we' and 'the team' refer to the five people who helped collect and analyse the material.

Eviction	28,9
Housing shortage	26,7
Family (marriage, preference)	24,7
Economic (rent, unemployment, etc.)	12,8
Unspecified	6,4

Eviction was one of the major reasons for relocation at Isipingo Farm. Within this category the Group Areas Act was the single most important cause, but households had also been moved because of expropriation by the local authority for slum clearance, and by landlords who required additional living space themselves.

The housing shortage (manifested in overcrowding) was an important factor in relocation to the Farm, while various aspects concerned with family organisation were also mentioned. In summary, therefore, most households appeared to have relocated involuntarily because of eviction or housing shortages, which compelled them to leave their previous localities.

Part of the enquiry was directed to exploring the perception of alternative solutions to the housing problem in the area: "What do you think should be done to solve the housing problem in the Indian community?" Responses to this question varied widely, but can be presented as follows:

Opening up of more land for private development	28%
Public housing by the authorities	26%
Proclaiming more Indian group areas	10%
Construction of flats (apartments)	8%
Removal of parks and open spaces for buildingg	8%
Provision of loans and financial concessions	3%

It is quite clear that the dominant perception is that the authorities hold the key to the solution (more land, public housing, etc.). The fact that the Group Areas Act does not exist any more does not solve the housing problem since the majority of people on the Farm cannot afford to move to other places.

5.2.2.2 *Services and Facilities*

A combination of the problems related to facilities and services indicates a roughly 75% level of discontentment on this issue. This is a rather bleak picture, since satisfaction with the external residential environment is an important consideration in community life. Solutions to problems involving facilities and services are notoriously difficult to accomplish in a short time. Yet, inadequate facilities and services are a source of collective stress that tends to generate and maintain a wide range of community problems.

The perceptions of the community include problems such as inadequate bus services, poor roads, insufficient and inadequately equipped recreational facilities and inadequate shops. It is obvious that numerous practical and financial factors mitigate against an easy solution. Yet the kind of amenities referred to are often central to the enhancement of social contact and the quality of life in the area. When asked what were the essential needs of the households at Isipingo Farm, the following were gathered by the team, percentage distribution of households by perceived needs:

Item	Isipingo Farm
Water	94,5
Security of Tenure	76,1
Electricity	95,5
Sanitation	61,5
Roads/Streets/Pavements/Drainage	61,5
Schools (Creches)	22,0
Community Facilities (Clinics, Temples)	15,6
Recreation Facilities	19,3
Commercial Facilities (Markets, Shops, Garages)	6,4
Public Transport	12,8

It is clear that electricity is the most frequently perceived need followed by water and security of tenure, but the majority of households also mentioned sanitation and streets. There is no electricity at Isipingo Farm with the exception of only one street, which was supplied. However, this was not in the area of spontaneous settlement. Paraffin and gas are the most important source of domestic lighting.

The absence of any laid-on water supply into the shacks represented a major problem. Families sent children to fetch water, usually in the afternoons after school. A variety of methods are used to carry water from buckets to specially constructed water carts. Children transporting water are a familiar sight on the streets. Almost two-thirds of the dwellings at Isipingo Farm relied on purchased water obtained from landlords or shopkeepers while the remainder had access to individual taps or commercial standpipes.

The total absence of or inadequate access to piped water supplies in the area naturally had a significant influence on bathing and toilet arrangements. Thus 76% of the dwellings had individual 'makeshift' arrangements for bathing, while the remainder shared bathing facilities. This obviously created a tremendous amount of discomfort and dissatisfaction. Women, in particular, faced a tremendous sense of insecurity when using these facilities, since privacy was easily interrupted.

5.2.2.3 *Social Deviance*

In a community such as Isipingo Farm there are bound to be various forms of social deviance. We therefore asked our respondents to indicate whether any of a range of social problems existed in their immediate residential surrounding (i.e. on their own or adjacent properties). More than two-thirds of our representative sample conceded the presence of serious problems around them. The most serious problems as gathered by the team were:

Heavy drinking	56 %
Juvenile delinquency	42 %
Serious family and marital friction	41 %
Drug abuse	30 %

Perceptions of serious problems as high as these is disturbing in what is, after all, a residential neighbourhood. It is disturbing not only because of the nature of the problems, but also because living among such problems must undermine pride in the community and set a poor example to the emergent generations. Clearly there is a need for an increased provision of professional welfare services of all appropriate types.

When specifically probed about their own teenager's behaviour problems, a large majority of our respondents indicated the presence of difficulties. A number of parents complained of having to keep their children, especially their daughters, indoors because of the fear of them becoming influenced and exposed to the 'wrong company.' Major problems, in order of frequency of mention, were:

- education-related problems (truancy, etc);
- general disobedience
- undesirable company and social life; and
- work shyness.

A specific question was also asked about the prevalence of youth gangs in the area. In terms of the perceived seriousness of the problems, the results as gathered by the team were:

Gangs	
- a very serious problem	46 %
- a serious problem	40 %
- not a serious problem	15 %

5.2.2.4 *Education Problem*

A large number of our respondents mentioned educational problems in response to the general question on problems in the area. These issues referred mainly to a shortage of high school facilities or school facilities generally, in the area. Other probes, however, brought to light additional issues related broadly to education. Among people with children who had left school, a majority indicated that the child had left school earlier than he or she should or might have. Reasons in order of priority, were:

- economic;
- children disliking school;
- children's behavioural problems;
- lack of aptitude.

A majority appeared to have left school at Standard 6 or earlier, and most of the remainder at Standard 8 or earlier. Only a few, if any, managed to obtain their matriculation pass. Of families with children in school, almost 50 % declared that there were no particular problems in the school situation affecting their children. It must, however, be pointed out that the majority attended schools outside the area. The remaining half of the parent population who did discern particular problems mentioned the following:

- transport problems for children;
- syllabus and homework problems;
- teacher quality.

5.2.2.5 *Marriage and Family Life*

Basic to the life of any community is the quality of its most fundamental institution, the family. In any poor community where there are high rates of male unemployment or perhaps even work shyness and alcohol misuse, the mother is forced to take over more and more responsibility for the day to day affairs of the family. Mother-dominated families can emerge as a basic institutional pattern. This was also our finding in Isipingo Farm.

We asked our housewife respondents the following questions: *In your house, who makes the decision - who has the most say - as regards:*

	Answer		
	Wife	Both	Husband
how to spend on various things?	X		
what children are allowed to do?	X		
when to buy large consumer durables?		X	
what to do over week-ends?	X		

(the X indicates the answers given)

Although there is obviously great variation in family roles in the community the overall pattern seems to be for the wife/mother to be more dominant in decision making than the father/husband. This, of course, is limited to the issues we raised in the interview.

5.2.2.6 *The Religious Life of the Community*

The Isipingo Farm community comprises of a number of religious groupings. Especially dominant (in order of numbers) are Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. By and large, our findings attest to a very high level of formal religious identification in the area. This could also be matched by the frequency of Christian church attendance:

once per week or more	55 %
+/- once per month	22 %
less frequently	15%
never / hardly ever	7%

Most of the religious participation is passive (i.e. attending services). Only some 18% of the population take part in religious activities connected with the church other than worship. The largest single type of activity is singing in the church choir followed closely by active devotional meetings, serving on fund-raising bodies, committees connected with church welfare activities, church councils and youth groups. Our respondents were presented with fixed response alternatives in the following way: *Thinking of religion and attending Christian religious meetings which of the following is very important, quite important or less important to you?* The rank order of endorsement of the alternatives presented were as follows (about 200 people responded):

- 1st "feeling close to God"
- 2nd "feeling moved and inspired by the Spirit of the Lord"
- 3rd "feeling comforted and secure"
- 4th "helping to think deeply about oneself"
- 5th "finding Jesus and being saved"

- 6th "feeling confident and stronger"
- 7th "working for social reform and justice in our country"
- 8th "feeling one has to do one's duty"
- 9th "a place to be with good friends and people"
- 10th "something interesting to do."

These results indicate a very deep sense of closeness to God. The primary importance of the spiritual experience for its own sake emerges clearly. Following this is a concern with personal support and salvation. The lower priority placed on a concern with the so-called "social gospel" is particularly noteworthy.

Our findings indicate that the endorsement of terms such as "feeling close to God," "feeling moved and inspired by the Spirit..." can reflect a deep and sincere spirituality and can embrace an abiding concern with fellow human beings and their communities. In general, though the tone is one of egocentric inspiration rather than dedication to service.

In view of the intensity of formal religious participation, we considered it necessary to assess the community's evaluation of their own churches and congregations. We asked: *Nowadays people seem to criticise the churches quite a lot. Thinking of your own congregation, which of the following is true?* Deliberately we presented our respondents with a list of negative statements simply in order to gain insight into the perceived shortcomings of the churches and hence gain insight into the religious needs of the community. The results were as follows:

	% Agree
Does not take enough interest in the social problems of the Indian community	49
Does not help one enough with personal problems and difficulties	46
A little dull and uninteresting	46
Too concerned about raising funds	40
Does not give a feeling of togetherness with fellow worshippers	38
Does not help one feel deep faith and closeness to God	38
Does not help one to feel saved and feel the spirit of Jesus	38
A little out of date and old fashioned	31
Any other response	31

Here we find an interesting but understandable contradiction. While many people seem to feel a strong need for some socio-political concerns by the church, it is a passive need; they themselves wish to pursue their purely spiritual concerns. The rank-order of the remaining items is not in contradiction with earlier results; as expected the greatest need after the "social concerns" is for personal support, greater emotive appeal, togetherness and salvation.

The problems of dullness in the established churches may be quite serious, if the apparent rapid increase in support for Pentecostal sects and charismatic movements in the area is anything to go by. The established churches in the area are losing members to "tent" or "school" churches and ever more expressive denominations. For example, a new Pentecostal Church has attracted large numbers of people.

While in no way judging this trend, we considered it important, as an insight into needs, to assess reasons for the attractions of the newer congregations. We asked: *Some churches, like the Pentecostal Church, for example, are attracting more and more people away from the older churches, why do you feel this is happening?*

Answers indicated clearly that, compared with older churches, the services were captivating, allowing of free emotive expression, providing greater personal contentment and reassurance, as well as providing a sense of cohesion and shared closeness to God.

5.2.2.7 Leadership (Political)

A large majority of our respondents expressed little or no confidence in leaders within the community. The only ones held in high esteem were those involved in humanitarian activities. Our respondents blamed the Isipingo Borough and parliamentarians for their poor and pathetic conditions. They feel that the government could do a great deal to assist them, yet such is never achieved, despite many appeals. The government holds the answers to the environmental problems, housing crisis, etc. Many of our respondents viewed the new ANC dominated government, since 1994, with deep suspicion and concern. There is a sense of feeling that the

needs of Indian people are not taken seriously. Consequently, they seem to express a general sense of apathy when it comes to politics, since it is of no benefit to them. The majority expressed no trust or confidence in their political leaders since nothing is being done to help them. They seem somewhat suspicious and uncertain of President Mbeki. This could be attributed to the fact that they are somewhat concerned by the faction fights that occur regularly between the Indian people and the neighbouring Black community. It is quite clear that the community is facing tremendous problems in acquiring good leaders. As a result, many have turned to religious leaders for guidance and assistance.

5.2.3 **Assessment**

We will now attempt to draw together the diverse and often contradictory threads in the research findings as a basis for setting out tentative conclusions relevant to a Christian ministry in the Isipingo Farm Community.

5.2.3.1 *The Perception of Social Problems - Moral Consciousness in the Community*

We have briefly outlined the rather substantial range of serious problems that exist in the community. The majority of the community are somewhat conservative in nature. Furthermore, the sharp contrast between behaviour and expectation seems to produce a widespread sense of moral failure. Group work needs to be undertaken in order to allow people in the area to become more reflective and open in their approach to problems in their midst.

The same contradictions apply in the area of child rearing and the socialisation of young people. Parents are dominantly concerned with inculcating respectability and the success ethic in their children. Signs of a more expressively oriented approach to child training were rare. Yet the children are beset with problems and conflicts which incline many of them to dropping out of school, taking jobs which offer immediate reward, and, in some cases, to mild or serious delinquency.

In the approaches to these problems of community self-evaluation, the church can play an important part. In their approach to religion, the people in the area tend to reflect a need to evade their day to day problems in their search for highly emotive religious experience. It would seem appropriate that church leaders and ministers be given encouragement and opportunities to consider the possible relevance of their parish activities to the troubled consciousness of their parishioners, not by offering only consolation and emotional relief, but also by exploring the possibilities of a more positive, supportive ministry in a community context.

5.2.3.2 *Leadership*

We have already outlined how critical the leadership issue is in the Isipingo Farm Community. One of the main problems is a remarkable lack of leader recognition in the area. Substantial proportions (80%) of people recognise no community leaders. Leaders and office bearers in organisations were all too often seen as ineffectual, opinionated and all too patronising in their manner of interacting with the ordinary people. People in the area are generally highly pessimistic about the possibility of change in their own civic and political affairs. Their very powerlessness and pessimism causes them to deny the possibility of leaders being effective, hence leading to a withdrawal of interest in and support for leaders and community organisations. The majority of leaders, however, were aware of the criticisms directed at them, and those interviewed accepted the input from the community that we were able to provide, in good spirit. The leaders saw the community as lacking an appropriate response to leadership as well, however.

The church can play a key role in improving the relationship between the leaders and the community. It seems necessary for programmes to be run, initially of a simple and low level kind, which will allow:

- leaders and the community to interact more successfully;
- more representative spokesmen and women for the area to be drawn into the leadership circles;

- leaders to demonstrate the ability to achieve some success; and
- the sense of pointlessness about organised community endeavour among both leaders and the rest of the community to be combatted.

Unless the relationship between the community and its leaders improve there can be no hope of community development.

Since many of the people in Isipingo Farm are turning to religious leaders for help and guidance, indications are that the church has a very significant role to play in addressing the problems within the community. The church must identify and eradicate the causes of poverty within the Isipingo Farm Community. Moreover, the church must seek to heal the rift that exists between the community and its leaders, including religious and church (Christian) leaders. The church can no longer ignore the problems in the area if it is to find relevance in its ministry with the poor in Isipingo Farm. The church should aid in a community development programme. In the next section we attempt to illustrate how we, as Christian workers, had tried to assist in the development of the Isipingo Farm Community.

5.2.4 Ministry with the Poor: Developing the Community

In the previous section we analysed the conditions prevalent in the Isipingo Farm Community. The task that awaits us now is to determine how we can most relevantly minister the Christian gospel in the given situation. Having served as a pastor within this community, I now propose to relate the more essential features of ministry with the poor in Isipingo Farm. It is hoped that through the ensuing discussions a few basic principles for mission and development amongst the poor in general will emerge. As pointed out earlier, it is not my intention here to engage a deeply theological discussion but to simply raise some theological issues that embrace a theology of development. I shall attempt a more thorough theological discussion and dialogue on these issues in the next chapter.

5.2.4.1 Identification

We discovered in our ministry at Isipingo Farm that the first step in working with the poor is to become poor ourselves. We are to become poor for the sake of the 'kingdom' so there will be no more poor. This, however, is subject to interpretation. What does it mean to become poor?

Firstly, it could mean that we must assume poverty in a literal sense.⁴ It means that we should give up our riches and assume destitution. A notable example of this type can be seen in St. Francis of Assisi who took Matthew 19:21 very seriously: "if you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come, follow me"

This view obviously has its merits. In the scriptures greed (or covetousness) and excessive luxury are as much sins as immorality or adultery (Ephesians 5: 3-5). Indeed we are not even to have lunch with a brother who is greedy (1 Corinthians 5:11). For any person who would live out a gospel of justice and grace, to live luxuriously in the midst of poverty is a denial of justice.

Secondly, becoming poor does not necessarily mean embracing poverty in a literal sense. It means identifying with the needs of the poor.⁵ Though Jesus became poor, he ate daily, he had a finely woven robe, and he grew up with a skilled trade as a *tekton* (a cross between a carpenter, cabinetmaker and stone mason - a skilled job, perhaps equivalent today to that of an engineer or architect). He loved to celebrate and freely went to rich people's homes. He and the twelve disciples gave to a class of poor yet poorer than themselves.⁶

Imitatio Cristi is an old phrase of the church that describes this life of identification with the poor, of incarnating Christ. The choice of such a life leads one deep into the very nature of Jesus' deity. It tells us something of his type of poverty. Jesus identified himself with the poor. But he never was identical. Though he would classify himself as a poor man, as one of the *anaw*, he was

⁴ See MARK W. THOMSEN'S article, Jesus Crucified and the Mission of the Church, in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXXVII, number 306, April 1988, p.255.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *International Review of Mission*, Sixth Assembly: A Missionary Perspective, Vol. LXXII, number 288, October 1983, p.632.

always God.⁷

Becoming poor amongst the poor involves recognising this duality; it's not becoming hopeless among the hopeless. It is not becoming destitute amongst the destitute - the destitute poor have no respect for this themselves. They themselves seek to move upwards, at least to the level of sufficiency for their own needs. Jesus' incarnation was not that of becoming a malnourished beggar, but becoming fully human in the context of inhumanity. Identification is not destitution but demonstrating by actions and revealing by deeds of spiritual power by miracles and deeds of love, the fullness of Christ's deity in the midst of depravity.⁸ In seeking a just society to live as poor amongst the poor, we cannot live a life of destitution.

The latter view best describes our position for ministry in the Isipingo Farm community. We observed here that the poor looked to us for help in fulfilling their needs and addressing their problems. They naturally expected us to have the material resources and contacts to assist them in their distressing circumstances.

We discovered that identifying with the poor in Isipingo Farm required two movements. The first movement in becoming poor is faithful commitment to be with the poor. It is impossible for us to develop a compassionate understanding of the plight of the poor until we step out of anonymity and apathy in order to become involved with them, in order to see the faces of poverty, in order to feel their hurt, in order to take the suffering of another and make it our own. In practice, this means a faithful commitment to be with the poor and to join with them in their struggle for political and economic justice. The way and means of living out the personal and communal decision will come through prayerfully and reflectively listening to daily experience and the message of the gospel.

We therefore submit that the first step in liberating evangelisation consists in "being evangelised" not in "speaking", but in "listening", not in "finding" but in "being found". Because to be able to

⁷ VIV GRIGG, *Op. cit.*, p.61

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.88

hear the voice of the poor from the very inside of their world, their life and their struggle is not merely "to seek" the Lord. It is, first of all, to be found by Him (John 15:1-16; 1 John 4:7,13; Matthew 11:25-27).⁹

Cochrane points out that listening is not enough, because participation, if it is to be trusted, also includes giving account of oneself as one speaks to the other from the foreground position of subject.¹⁰ I agree with him here. It is through both listening and participating that we are able to discover selfhood. Through the process of discovering the life experiences of another and sharing our own, we are able to engage and shape self. However, this is not always possible because of the power relationships that exist among subjects. The more powerful are usually condescending and domineering in their approach. They seem to offer quick solutions to problems rather than attempt to understand the root causes that makes it difficult for the poor person to deal with her circumstances. There are inherent structural, systematic issues involved as well. There are distinctions in assessing any relationship governed by relative power. We may speak at the other, intending to establish or extend control over the other; we may speak for the other, representing the other but also thereby erasing the other in part. Such approaches describe the modernisation approach to development in which the potential and ability of the other is not taken seriously. The other option is that we may speak *with* the other, embracing the struggle for mutuality. This does not imply total identification but the conscious attempt to listen, participate, express sensitivity and make the struggles of the other your struggles too. This can be described as the people-centred approach to development. This is what Jesus did in his ministry on earth as he took people seriously.

At the heart of the matter is the admonition repeatedly put forth by Jesus to his followers: "Have eyes to see and ears to hear" (Matthew 13:1-30; 11:25; Luke 10: 21-24; Mark 13:16,17) that which the Lord is working out in the heart of history by means of those who "hunger and thirst after justice" (Matthew 5:6). This position leads us to penetrate deeply into the depths of the people's soul, their history, their culture, their language, their symbolic world, their wisdom and

⁹ World Council of Churches, Ministry With The Poor, *International Review of Mission*, 1977, p.17.

¹⁰ JAMES R COCHRANE. *Circles of Dignity*, Op. cit., p.96.

in the final count, their own historical process. But this has serious limitations. One cannot truly have a complete identity with the other's experience and can therefore not rightfully speak on behalf of another. However, after earning the trust of the other one can only partially represent the experience of the other not for the other but *with* the other. This means empowering the poor to speak for themselves. Schalk Pienaar describes this process as he describes the mission of the Care Centre at his church:

Our mission is to work with people as a co-pilgrim - we are on a journey together. We are pilgrims-with. They are the experts of their lives. We share our lives on invitation. We're a bottom-up type of mission here rather than a top-down that says we've got something, you need to get it. We would like to rather see that they've got something that we need to get, and in the process there's something we can offer as well... We don't take them anywhere, they take themselves. We just inform the process if they should want that. And then they go where they would like to go.¹¹

This indicates the need for people to *participate* in the creation of their own future.

In the above comment Pienaar outlines a process that is the key to a people-centred approach to development. Far too often (as we shall see in the next case study) Christian churches and leaders tend to take the lead in making decisions and acting on behalf of poor communities and people. They often do this believing that this is what Christ wants.¹² However, what is at stake is not only the discovery of Christ in the people, but deeper still, the unfolding of the Lord along with the people. Before we seek to tell them about God, perhaps if we first listened we will discover that the poor have something to tell us. Jon Sobrino points out that the poor have something to tell us about God, about the church, and about love and hope that none other can equate.¹³

¹¹ See page 387 in this study.

¹² For example, in the next case study Pastor Maren tells us that all the projects he started were as a result of divine inspiration.

¹³ JON SOBRINO, *The True Church And The Poor*, Op. cit. p.93.

Another movement in becoming poor and bringing the 'kingdom' near is educating ourselves and others to take a prophetic stance in light of the gospel. Identification with the poor is not enough, however, their struggles must actually become our struggles, and their pains must become our pains. Choon Chef Pang has expressed it well: "Social concern like practically all other Christian concerns, is ultimately a concern for truth ... the world becomes our arena. Unless we are involved in it we have no right to address ourselves to it, let alone do it convincingly and effectively. Our involvement thus becomes our credibility."¹⁴

Becoming poor thus involves taking up the struggles of the poor, against poverty and injustice. Identifying with the poor means a concrete involvement with the poor person's suffering and pain. This is what we discovered to be the starting point for effective and relevant ministry with the poor in Isipingo Farm. Moreover, identification means allowing the poor to speak for themselves and taking ownership of the process to create and shape their own future. Hence, any attempt at development must take the latter point seriously. People must be involved in transforming their own society and paving their own future.

5.2.4.2 *Proclamation and Praxis*

The leaders of the Presbyterian Church (and other church leaders) in the Isipingo Farm community have a very definite involvement in addressing the needs within the community. This can be seen in some of the projects they operate within the community to transform the poor and their conditions. This practical involvement attempts to address the socio-political and economic exploitation that is prevalent within the community.

However, most of these church leaders do not see such involvement as the main objective. Their main task is to lead people to Jesus Christ. This probably explains why the majority of people in the community think that the primary goal of the church is to make them feel "close to God". Whilst the majority of Christians expressed that the Church fulfilled their expectations of helping

¹⁴ CHOON CHEF PANG, *Working Together in Social Concern*, unpublished paper presented at the First National Christian Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 1979, p.9.

them to develop their relationship with God at least 49% indicated that they wanted the Church to get more involved with their daily life experiences as well:

... (the church) does not take enough interest in the social problems of the Indian Community. It does not help one enough with personal problems and difficulties.

The above views express the struggle within the Christian church to understand its mission in the world. The assumptions of our Western worldview (which is prevalent here) lead us to separate the physical and the spiritual dimensions of reality. In making this separation, we assume that redemption affects the spiritual instead of the physical realm. This view of redemption leads us to assume that development work does not make a direct spiritual contribution to Christian mission.

This assumption creates a need for some to justify why we feed the hungry, treat the sick, and educate the illiterate. Some justify development work, firstly, because it creates opportunities for evangelism. This can be seen in the work of the church in Isipingo Farm and also in the interviews conducted with some of the Pastors. Doug Hammond, for example, states the mission of the Salvation Army: "...Our mission is, first of all, proclamation of the gospel and calling people to repentance. The second part of our mission is the proclamation and living out a life of holiness. That really is what our whole outreach to the poor is. Our aim and our goal in meeting the needs of the poor is in obedience to God."¹⁵ Although Hammond believes that the separation of mission as "one spiritual and one social is a lie," he expresses a guilt of not pointing to Jesus Christ at times in their "social" ministry.¹⁶

Secondly, however, there are others who say development complements evangelism like the two wings of a bird complement each other.¹⁷ Schalk Pienaar, for example, establishes this point of view: "...When I come in the name of Christ social concern and evangelism becomes *interconnected*. I think it's a false dichotomy, personally I don't think you can separate them like

¹⁵ See page 379 in this study.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 380. Hammond pointed out that that is why they have put up a big sign outside the Mission Centre that says "Jesus is Lord".

¹⁷ It must be said, however that most people who hold this view often do not extend it to seeing redemption in the physical realm.

that. I think it's the old way of looking at mission and I think it's a very false one. Because it's about doing things, rather than *being with* people. Some evangelise and others begin with social concern, for me, the issue is how can I live my life as a Christ-follower (*italics added*)?"¹⁸ In this comment, Pienaar sees the task of Christian mission as much more than evangelism, it is being *the presence* of Christ in the world. The task is to be like Christ to the other and in stating this Pienaar mentions the example of Mother Teresa.¹⁹

Father Stan of St. Anthony's Church adopts a similar view concerning Christian mission by defining salvation in a broader perspective: "To develop the whole man (sic) is the Christian mission. Everything is contained in that. All these things are contained in salvation. And if you see a frustrated man you have to try and develop him, help him in his education to build him so that he can appreciate what life can give him that helps him spiritually and provides upliftment. Salvation is not just a simple spiritual thing."²⁰

Matthew reports that the Lord went about Galilee "teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (Matthew 4:23). Thus Jesus saw his ministry as a three-fold task, the elements of which were interdependent and inseparable.²¹

However, in the event of separating them in the order of priority, as some people tend to do, I would contend that in the community of the poor deeds precede words. It is particularly important to note how many times Paul linked his task of verbal proclamation to the task of carrying out missions of relief (see e.g. Romans 15:25). Indeed, it is striking that Luke states that Paul's first mission on behalf of the church was one of relief- carrying famine relief from Antioch to Jerusalem. Luke then follows this with the Holy Spirit's commissioning of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:27-30; 13:2). Paul does not seem to have any internal dilemma. Even though he sees himself as set apart as the "Apostle to the Gentiles", concerned with proclaiming the good news

¹⁸ See page 385 in this study.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ See page 369 in this study.

²¹ J.J.KRITZINGER, *The South African Context for Mission*, Cape Town: Lux Verbi, 1988, p.34

of the gospel, he is still concerned with the physical needs of the Jewish Church Community. As Karl Barth has so aptly pointed out in his commentary on Romans, we should not be surprised that after eleven chapters of well thought out doctrine Paul turns to the consequence of that doctrine: ethics - how we live!²²

We observed in Isipingo Farm that the poor best understood the gospel through concrete actions. They see God as a God of action who takes side with the poor and oppressed. Jesus' identification with the poor in his birth and subsequent ministry is for them, in addition, a reflection of the nature of God who sends Jesus. From the beginning of Jesus' life, it is obvious that God is doing something different. Therefore the Church leaders within this community realised that they had to become the instruments of God's peace, justice, righteousness, love and mercy. They had to proclaim the gospel with decisive actions (praxis), not empty words. Hence, they attempted to fulfil the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.

The emphasis on deeds, however, is not intended to belittle the necessity of verbal proclamation. Many evangelical preachers remind us that the poor too are sinners. They too must repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord, God and Saviour. They too must know the expectations of the Messianic Lord and what it takes to be a true child of God. They too are guilty of exploiting others. These evangelical preachers assert that poverty is not a right to the 'kingdom', as some may think, repentance, faith and obedience to God's Word is. The focus here is always on salvation understood in a very narrow (spiritual) sense.

But is our spirituality not shaped by our experiences in life? Does not the context in which we are found influence the way we think and feel about God? Our social, political and economic reality, as we shall see in the next chapter, certainly determines our 'picture' of God. This also raises questions about the kind of spirituality we tend to profess. In the context of the poor should spirituality not be related to justice and righteousness? In our view in the context of the poor spirituality must be related to justice and righteousness. This has an impact on the way we choose

²² KARL BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Trans. F. C. Iloskyns, London: Oxford University Press, 1933, p.41

to proclaim (preach) Christ in the context of the poor. Emilio Castro reminds us of the priority of preaching in the following comment:

According to Matthew, Jesus teaches, preaches, heals. Perhaps we need to start with preaching because that is what he did, coming after John the Baptist, proclaiming that the "kingdom of God is at hand."²³

However, Castro goes on to qualify this in relation to the poor - he states that:

Jesus' proclamation centres on the Kingdom, announcing good news to the poor (Luke 6:20) and denouncing the rich (Luke 6:24), the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23: 23-26). He rebukes the political powers (Luke 13: 31-35; Mark 10:42). The proclamation of Jesus has a double function: it announces the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God that brings the good news of redemption, of liberation for the poor and the outcast, it also contains a warning of judgement on all those who are powerful in society and reject the call to repentance.²⁴

Moltmann points out that both the nature of the 'kingdom' that we proclaim and the personality of the 'King' who commissions us make it impossible for us to be satisfied with a purely conceptual, intellectual proclamation. Because the 'kingdom' is life, Jesus is the living Lord, and the Spirit is empowering reality, the proclamation needs to be acted upon, manifested and incarnated.²⁵ It is impossible to speak of the "kingdom of God" in a convincing way unless we manifest the powers of the 'kingdom.' Paul said that the 'kingdom' does not consist in words but in power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

²³ EMILIO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission*, Op. cit., p.77.

²⁴ Ibid., p.78.

²⁵ JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, London: SCM Press, 1975, p.76. See the agreements but also the differences in emphasis between Karl Barth and Liberation Theologians. Both insist on word as well as action, but Barth - of course - giving priority to the word and the others to action! (KARL BARTH, *Church Dogmatics*; Vol. IV, number 3, p.860f).

If we are to understand this correctly then it means that the 'kingdom' is proclaimed when *praxis* is engaged on behalf of the poor in their quest for justice, righteousness and peace. Preaching in South Africa and in other parts of the world has been used to keep people in oppression. It has been used to teach ideology rather than theology. If God is on the side of the poor then it is the poor who must teach us theology because it is they who really point us to the true God described in the Scriptures. Hence, theology done from the context of poverty and oppression (from below) provides a more accurate picture of who God really is. We have for far too long taken our theology from the educated, wealthy and powerful. Preaching must bring about *liberation* from oppression and exploitation. Preaching must also bring about *conscientisation* (making the poor aware of their situation and of what God says about it in scripture) and *empowerment* so that the poor are able to challenge the structures that oppress them. In this sense then proclamation (preaching) is related to human development. In this link we also see the integration of proclamation and praxis.

In a people-centred approach to development both proclamation and praxis must be accepted as integral aspects of Christian mission. We mentioned earlier that the Western separation between the spiritual and physical has led us to two views on development and evangelism:

(1) Development work is seen as opportunities for evangelism and, (2) Development complements evangelism. Although both positions may be valid to some extent, they miss two important points about Christian mission.

The first point is that Christian mission is an effort to express God's redemptive work in all creation. Colossians 1:15-20 impresses us with God's effort to reconcile the seen and unseen elements of creation to Godself through Christ, thus bringing peace. We cannot bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth without recognising that redemption affects the fullness of creation. The second point of Christian mission that we are prone to miss is the need to address the basic assumptions people make about life when we communicate the Good News.

To people in many parts of the world, the dichotomy between the physical and spiritual realms of creation that Western Christians make has little sense. These people have a primal worldview.

They do not assume we can split reality into two realms that do not normally interact. Instead, they see creation woven together as a seamless garment.²⁶ They believe the spiritual realm governs the behaviour of the physical realm. They do not believe the physical realm is self-sufficient. Rather, they believe that changes in the spiritual realm cause changes in the physical realm.

People with a primal worldview ask different questions about the spirituality of development. They want to know that if the spiritual realm governs the changes we are attempting to make in the physical. Do we seek permission from the spiritual realm to make these changes? Have we performed the correct ceremonies or sacrifices to get the blessing of the spiritual realm? Where is God in the knowledge, expertise and technology we bring to their cultures? Is the power of Jesus stronger than the powers of the witch doctors?

For Christians with a non-Western worldview, where technology has not been so invasive, God's power is esteemed to deliver them from the spiritual and physical threats to their well being. This esteem for God's power is the pulse of people who embrace non-Western, or primal, worldviews.²⁷ They esteem God not only for providing people with an ultimate purpose and meaning in life, but also because God provides for their every need.

In fact, God's provision for their daily needs is more central to their faith than his providing an ultimate meaning for their lives. When they cannot find adequate food, shelter, or medical care, a faith that focuses on their ultimate purposes in life is irrelevant. They need the guidance, peace and security that come with the provision for their daily sustenance.

The problem we have in understanding the nature of Jesus' ministry, and in fulfilling his mandate, is making a relationship between preaching, advocating justice and ministering to the poor, naked, sick, hungry, and oppressed. Do we advocate justice and minister to the poor, naked, sick, hungry, and oppressed because it gives us the opportunity to preach the Good News to

²⁶ BRUCE BRADSHAW, *Bridging the Gap*, USA: Marc Publishers, 1993, p.3

²⁷ Ibid.

them? Or is advocating justice and ministering to the poor, sick, naked, hungry, and oppressed, in itself good news? A holistic understanding of evangelism (and development) affirms that the latter things mentioned are indeed the Good News. Hence, as we see it, the biblical concepts of development and evangelism are not separate.

5.2.4.3 *Dignity and Self-Worth*

The Isipingo Farm community consists of people who have little or no respect for self. Their concept, value and appreciation of life reached alarmingly low proportions. The abuse of alcohol and drugs, the low morale, violence and suicide in the community is a sheer indication of this. The lack of money, food and comfortable dwellings further added to the miseries of life. In addition, the social, economic and political domination and exploitation enhanced the feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness. They often felt ignored, forgotten, ridiculed and abused by the rich and powerful. In such a case, many may, and often do, conclude that God also has forgotten them. Everything - if you live in poverty and under oppression - suggests that God is not with you! God is not here! If God lives, God has forgotten you, ignores you or even worse, God is punishing you! How do we minister to people in such a context?

In Isipingo Farm the Presbyterian Church established Home Bible Study groups. In these groups the members of this community discovered that they too have been created in the image of God, and that they too are the children of God. This fundamental biblical assertion is of enormous importance to the dignity of all human beings, to their personhood and relationship with the Creator. They discovered that the Creator has also redeemed or recreated them, at great personal cost, through the incarnation and atonement of his Son. And the costliness of God's redeeming work reinforces the sense of human worth, which his creation has already given us. One of the central focuses of this church's ministry was an affirmation of human dignity.

All the churches we examined in this study pointed to the need of (re-) affirming people's dignity. Most of their development programmes and projects were intended to help make people *self-reliant* and in this sense retain or inculcate their sense of dignity. Some of the projects that speak

of this are: education, skills and computer training and gardening projects among others. The attempt of these churches in this regard was to work towards the development of people, to help them to understand their worth and value in the eyes of God rather than in their relationships with people who exploited and dehumanised them. This is human development. Our value depends then on God's view of us and relationship to us, not on what others think of us or do to us. The destiny of people made in the image of God is to be fully human "subjects" (active participants in the history of their lives) and not "objects" (passive recipients of the dictates and impositions of others).²⁸

This was the mission of Jesus, that God's 'kingdom', may come and his will for justice and humanbeingness be done on earth. This is still his mission; this is what Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is doing and we are called to take part in this work of God. This is the good news to the poor in Isipingo Farm, that Jesus gives life to them in particular. God is on their side. Jon Sobrino states that the poor are able to understand this message well. He points out that they are accepted as constituting the primary recipients of the Good News, and therefore, as having an inherent capacity to understand it better than anyone else. This historical disposition of the poor presupposes their historical capacity to know the Good News in its formal character as grace that is, as something totally unexpected and freely given, and as content, that is, as life itself.²⁹

The Presbyterian Church in Isipingo Farm placed most stress on interactive bible studies and preaching in attempting to affirm people's dignity. However, affirming human dignity and self-worth is not only achieved through teaching and preaching. It is more concretely realised through praxis. Any plan for transforming human existence must provide adequate life - sustaining goods and services to the members of society. When a society has only minimal food, water, shelter and clothing as in the case of Isipingo Farm, existence becomes subhuman, distorting God's provisions for humanity's well being. The Old Testament establishes God's desire to meet these basic needs:

²⁸ JON SOBRINO, *Ibid.*, p.94.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.137.

Is not this what I required of you as a fast: to... set free those who have been crushed? Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked? (Is.58: 6-7).

Jesus said that the struggle to meet the needs of the poor - for food, water, shelter, clothing, health care, and spiritual nurturance - would be seen as an indication of true salvation on judgement day (Matthew 25: 31-46). Similarly, the apostle James indicates that out of a true and vital faith will spring the desire to supply the bodily needs of others (James 2: 15-16). Father Stan, whose church has embarked on outstanding programmes to help build human dignity and self-worth, states how their programmes have benefitted the community and people:

Well it has given them dignity and something to live for. Without education you have nothing. The Church gave them something to be proud of themselves and to take their place within the country when the new dispensation came about in 1994.

We try to develop the whole person here - spiritually, mentally, intellectually, physically, culturally and recreationally. We have a lot of recreation facilities here. We have squash, tennis, swimming, cycling, soccer, ballet, boxing and a fully equipped gymnasium.³⁰

In the above comment Father Stan shows the need to take into consideration the needs of the whole person. The Christian church must exercise such a broad ministry if it is serious about restoring human dignity among people that are poor, deprived and dehumanised. Development takes such a holistic view of the Christian mission.

5.2.4.4 *Compassion*

Who is the God whom Jesus knew and obeyed and revealed? "For Jesus, compassion was the central quality of God and the central moral quality of a life centred on God."³¹ "Be

³⁰ See p.377 in this study

³¹ MARCUS J. BORG, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, San Francisco: Harper, 1994, pp.31-32.

compassionate as your Father is compassionate" (Lk. 6:36).³² Moreover, Jesus, "God-with-a-face," is the embodiment of the divine compassion in the world.³³

Compassion is a passionate, loving response leading to action on behalf of those who suffer, and thus presupposes personal contact with the needy.³⁴ According to Borg it is both a feeling, being moved by the suffering of others, and a way of being, a willingness to share that suffering and to do something about it.³⁵ In and through Jesus, God shares the suffering of humanity and transforms it into new life. Christians are to be compassionate as the Father is compassionate.

Jesus, in his ministry on earth, set the pattern for compassionate ministry. Matthew talks about Jesus going ashore and seeing a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick (Matthew 14:14). Jesus told his disciples to feed the people: "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat and I am unwilling to send them away hungry lest they faint on the way" (Matthew 15:32). Luke paints a similar picture: "When the Lord saw a woman whose son had just died he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep" (Luke 7:13)."

Jesus and his disciples travelled all the towns and villages of Galilee. He taught in their synagogues. He preached the good news of the "kingdom of God." And when he saw the crowds, "he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). The Son of God did not merely weep or walk away when he observed earth's suffering from the heavens. He came to help and to pour out his very life for those who hurt and suffer. He saw people under the religious bondage of the Pharisees and he was concerned. He saw people under the grinding bondage of the Evil One - living out their days under the shadow of sin and death and he was concerned.³⁶ He came not to be ministered unto,

³² The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible uses the term merciful instead of compassionate, which is found in the Jerusalem Bible and the New English Bible. Borg argues persuasively that compassion is a better translation. BORG, *Ibid.*, pp.47-48.

³³ DONALD P. McNEILL, DOUGLAS A. MORRISON, and HENRI J. M. NOUWEN, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday Image Book, Part One, 1982, pp.15-16.

³⁴ WALDRON SCOTT, *Bring Forth Justice*, *Op. cit.*, p.122 f.

³⁵ M.J.BORG, *Meeting Jesus*, p.49

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.47.

but to minister. It was his compassion, his merciful heart that caused him to relate to the burdens and sorrows of his people. Hence if we are to minister to the poor in Jesus' name, we must do the same.

For Jesus, compassion was neither sentimental nor an individual virtue; rather compassion was political. When compassion led Jesus to touch a leper, heal a woman with constant menstruation, feed the hungry, forgive sinners, and share a meal with tax collectors and prostitutes, it was moving him to challenge the dominant socio-political paradigm of his social world. Thus Jesus was engaged in what can be called the "politics of compassion" in contrast to the "politics of purity" that dominated his social world.³⁷

Jewish society in the first century was structured around avoiding anything that would make one religiously unclean. The biblical roots of this purity system were found in the Book of Leviticus especially in the verse, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). Set in the context of laws about ritual and religious purity, the holiness of the Jewish community was defined in terms of purity.

The purity system tended to be hierarchical and exclusionary. It divided those who were born into the tribe of priests and Levites from those who were not, the righteous who observed the purity laws from sinners who were unclean and impure, the whole and the well from the handicapped and the ill, the rich (blessed by God) from the poor, males from females, and Jews from Gentiles. In effect, the purity system created a world with sharp social boundaries, a world where many were treated as outcasts.³⁸

In opposition to the teaching of the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders to "Be holy (pure) as God is holy," Jesus proclaimed, "Be compassionate as God is compassionate." Jesus' call to compassion can be seen as a radical challenge to the theology and the politics of the dominant social system of his time, a social structure that was an oppressive burden on the poor and the marginalised.

³⁷ BORG, *Meeting Jesus*, p.49.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.51-52.

Jesus' parables and sayings often indicated the purity system and those who used it for power and privilege. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37), for example, it is probable that the priest and Levite pass by the man beaten by robbers because they were afraid of becoming ritually unclean by drawing too close to him. The Samaritan, who is by definition impure, acts compassionately toward the wounded man and becomes the model of love of neighbour. Jesus prophetically denounced the Pharisees and other religious leaders for their rigorous following of the religious codes, to the neglect of practising justice and mercy and faith. Indeed, the string of Jesus' denunciations of the Pharisees and leaders collected in Luke 11 and Matthew 23 are dense with allusions to the purity system and the Pharisees' preoccupation with the outside and external, the law and duty, to the neglect of the spirit and the heart and justice and compassion. Here Jesus stands in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets who reminded the people of Israel that God was more concerned with justice and mercy and righteousness than with correct ritual or periodic fasting (Amos 5:21, 24; Is. 58:6-7).

Indeed, our work discovered that the poor in Isipingo Farm were not wanting the church to feel sorry for them or to merely pray for them - they wanted something more. They were in need of compassion. They were not poor because of laziness or choice; they were made poor through exploitation, oppression or circumstance. Hence they realised that any form of effective ministry amongst the poor must militate against the causes of poverty. Compassion in the Isipingo Farm Community means addressing the structures that dehumanise people. It means concretely involving oneself in the plight of the poor and their quest for justice. This is what Jesus did as he addressed the social, political and economic injustices in his time.

But how do we make the good news of Jesus Christ real and meaningful to the sinned-against in Isipingo Farm? How do we show them compassion? It is easy to be problem oriented. To be compassionate is to be solution oriented. The compassionate heart acknowledges that one cannot do everything but one can do something. I will now seek to illustrate examples of how the church exercised compassion amongst the poor in Isipingo Farm.

As the church observed the wretched faces of the hungry, it was moved to distribute food parcels containing the basic necessities. When Jesus saw that the people were hungry, he fed them (John 6). This concrete, tangible action, however, pointed beyond itself to spiritual reality. Jesus' purpose was not merely to feed the multitudes but vividly to portray the mission for which the Father had sent him.³⁹ He refused to be crowned as the earthly king. The bread with which he fed the people was a symbol of himself as the bread of life.

Thus the church realised that even as we feed the hungry in Isipingo Farm we must be careful to point them to the true bread of life. Sometimes compassionate service can lead the church to be regarded as an agency of social and health welfare and nothing more. They were absolutely cautious of such exclusive perceptions. But does the church feed the poor in the hope of making them Christian or does it feed them because they are hungry? My view is that if the church is to truly follow the example of her Lord then she would feed the hungry because they are poor and not because she wishes to convert them to Christ. The attempt of the church is to be the presence of Jesus by seeking to do what he did in his ministry with the poor. The goal must be to work with the poor in seeking their betterment and not because we aim to bring them into our agenda.

The distribution of food parcels to the poor can also cause a great deal of problems. On observation the church noticed that those who received these hampers eventually became quite dependent on them. True compassion must not seek to make people dependent, it must train them to be self sufficient and responsible. The best thing we can do for the poor is not to give handouts (although that is needed at times, such as after disasters), but to fight the structures of injustice and oppression which cause people to be poor. It is my view that giving handouts does not bring liberation but dependence. The social involvement of the churches implies their being aligned with the poor in their struggle. It is not social action for the poor. If it were so, it would have to be called social assistance rather than "social action", and social assistance implies a paternalistic approach to the poor. Again, if social action were to be identified with social assistance, it could

³⁹ See RENE PADILLA'S, Bible Studies, in *Missiology*, Vol.10,1982, p.323f

be described as not essential for the church's mission. When the church is aligned with the poor, therefore, and shares their concerns and struggles, the proclamation of the Gospel is substantiated by its being rooted in the praxis of liberation which opens up the way in history for a new, more just and more participatory society. This is a people-centred approach to development.

The poor of our world needs not so much a handout as they need a helping hand.⁴⁰ We need to understand their problems and then work with the individuals affected by the problems to help find a solution. That involves a commitment thorough enough to produce results. "Give a man a fish" the saying goes, "and you feed him for a day. But teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life-time."⁴¹

In John 13 we find Jesus in humility, washing the feet of his disciples. When he comes to Peter, Peter objects to Jesus washing his feet. But Jesus answered, *"Unless I wash you, you have no part with me"*. The ecstatic Peter then responds: *"Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well"*. But Jesus answered, *"A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean"*.

What is Jesus saying to Peter in this text? Perhaps He is saying that he is only prepared to address Peter's immediate need, *"because you have walked so much the most needy part of your body is your feet. I will wash your feet, you must do the rest!"*⁴²

The poor in their struggle for betterment can sometimes become quite demanding. They can sometimes abuse opportunity and kindness, even though it may not be intentionally. The church found in Isipingo Farm, that their generosity in providing groceries was abused by the requests for clothing, money and the paying of accounts. However, like Jesus, they learnt with time that they should only address their immediate and essential needs and empower them to do the rest for themselves. When people are able to do things for themselves it reduces their sense of

⁴⁰ B.N.Y. VAUGHAN, *The Expectation of the Poor*, Op. Cit., p.10

⁴¹ A quote from the famous Chinese philosopher Confucius.

⁴² This is my exegesis of the passage.

dependence and greatly affirms their dignity as human beings. This describes the self-reliance approach to development.

The church in Isipingo Farm engaged other programmes exercising compassionate ministry. Some of these programmes included soup kitchens, skills training, establishing an employment operation, etc. However, their programmes were not adequately structured to deal with the real issues of poverty brought about by exploitation and deprivation. Their ministry is very much like that of the early church driven by welfare, charity and 'love for the neighbour'. Father Stan expresses the same in the work of St Anthony's: "... Development work is centrally fixed in one's relationship with God and with your neighbour. Through your work, kindness and compassion you show love for your neighbour."

5.2.4.5 *Confrontation*

Confrontation is an essential principle for the Christian ministry, especially amongst the poor. Jesus confronted and dealt with unjust social, political and economical factors. His vicious attack on those who exploited the poor can be clearly seen in scripture: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices- mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matt. 23: 23). These are strong words that Jesus used but it powerfully reflects his views on injustice and exploitation.

In John 2: 13-16 we read: "When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple court he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market". In this passage we see Jesus angrily protesting at the defiling of the temple. But it is more than that. The priests had established a lucrative business of exchanging foreign money for Jewish currency, and also selling the animals needed for the sacrifices. This "religious

market" probably began as a convenience for the Jews who came long distances to worship in the temple; but in due time the convenience became a business, not a ministry. It was presided by worldly minded men whose main desire was to exercise authority and get rich. Jesus confronted this with great zeal particularly for the poor and exploited, as the Psalmist puts it: "The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people."

Hence mission must embrace the concern for justice as it seeks the liberation of the poor and oppressed, this is part and parcel to the establishment of the "kingdom of God" on earth. The church then is called to challenge and oppose oppressive structures in society as Jesus did. Having made this standpoint, we shall now seek to illustrate how the church confronted and tackled such issues in their ministry with the poor in Isipingo Farm. We shall give particular attention to the problems in the community outlined in the previous section.

5.2.4.5.1 Housing

The housing crisis, of course, has no easy solution. The answer to this problem according to our respondents, lay in the hands of the government. The economic injustices and the unfair distribution of wealth and land are the root causes of the housing crisis. In South Africa the minority group (whites) live on eighty percent of the land whilst the vast majority share the remaining twenty percent. Hence the problem encountered in Isipingo Farm is a direct result of the unfair distribution of land and resources. The evils within the community must be addressed. The governmental authorities must be confronted for their demonic systems and practices. This system of institutionalised evil must be broken. But how do we achieve this?

The church within the Isipingo Farm community was forced to educate people to stand up for their rights. They helped them realise that their plight was not God's plan for them in as much as it was peoples' greed. The Church helped them to plan and arrange protest marches and rallies to persuade the mind of governmental authorities to do something about the housing conditions. It called on the government to build more and better houses and to provide more land for private development. It also asked the authorities to provide housing subsidies so that more people could

afford to purchase houses, and to also provide public housing for the majority who could not afford to buy their own.

Apart from this, the church also got involved in community developmental programmes. However, its role in all this was to be servants of the poor in Isipingo Farm. Their purpose amongst them was to help the poor identify and utilise the skills and talents that God has given them, without telling them what to do.⁴³ The Church did not have the financial resources to support housing projects, but called on the government to assist in this matter.

5.2.4.5.2 Services and Facilities

The problems related to facilities and services created a huge discontentment in the Isipingo Farm community. It is clear that the lack of electricity and laid-on water supply into the houses represented the major problems. As a result the church was part of several delegations to the municipal offices in Isipingo. It pointed out to the authorities what benefits and improvements electricity and water provisions will bring to the Isipingo Farm community. For example, electricity encourages literacy and helps provide more jobs (since industries may develop in the area), and improves the whole of life. The provision of water supply into the houses will improve sanitary conditions, personal hygiene and subsequently lead to healthier conditions. Moreover the provision of electricity and water will enable people to have more time to pursue other interests, be it hobbies or trade, since a major part of their time is taken up in fetching water and collecting wood. Hence, they will have more time to devote themselves to the life and work of the church.

⁴³ "The church in mission must be involved in providing understanding, encouragement, support and opportunity for the groups of people in need who are trying to work together and organise to improve the situation. Without telling these groups what to do, the church can take the risk of speaking out objectively about what is going on in the process and can lend a hand in group and leadership development as opportunities occur". See *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXXVIII, number 310, April 1989, p.207.

5.2.4.5.3 Social Deviance

The problems of heavy drinking, juvenile delinquency, family and marital friction and drug abuse were the further evils in the Isipingo Farm community that had to be confronted. The church cannot avoid these issues, it must address them in a realistic way bearing in mind that most of these problems come with the emerging circumstances in which people are found.

5.2.4.5.4 Drinking and Men's Bible Study

Drinking with friends is a way to fill up the day and to drown out the sorrow, the despair and the lack of manliness inherent in unemployment. Throughout the community you would find groups of men drinking on street corners. One of the main priorities in the ministry of the church in Isipingo Farm was to take the gospel of Christ to these men right there on those street-corners. Did Jesus not do the same? In John's gospel Jesus is accused of being a glutton and a drunkard, why? This accusation is brought on him because he associated with those whom society rejected. Jesus joined them but he did not allow them to influence him, he influenced them. He changed them as he pointed them to the "Kingdom of God."

Hence the church leaders realised that if they wanted to confront the evils of alcohol and drug abuse they needed to break into these groups on the streets and share the good news that Jesus saves and cares for everyone, particularly for those who feel abandoned. They also established ties with alcohol and drug abuse organisations, to which they recommended those who were seeking help. It must not be the church's aim to duplicate services or re-invent the wheel. We must seek to use existing structures and facilities if possible.

5.2.4.5.5 Youth Group

To deal with the problems of juvenile delinquency the church established a group for young people to come together, where they shared each others company and dealt with issues concerning teenagers. They were also actively involved in community projects. The sole purpose

of this group was to keep these young people off the streets where experimenting with drugs and alcohol usually takes place. The group was also geared to meet the spiritual needs of teenagers.

5.2.4.5.6 Family Bible Studies

The friction within families led to the establishment of a bible study focused on the family. The church here provided biblical teachings on the Christian family. It helped parents and children to determine and fulfil their roles in the family. The church also outlined and explained the biblical views on marriage. The church must play a role in helping people to ascertain what God expects of them in their roles as spouses, parents and children.

5.2.4.5.7 Education

Especially amongst the poor education is a very sore issue. A large number of children become totally uninterested in obtaining a good education. The lack of electricity and transportation are disturbing factors interrupting educational interests.

The Christian leaders within the Isipingo Farm community tried to encourage people to educate themselves. In an attempt to encourage weaker students they held educational classes during the holidays tutoring them in their weaker subjects. They also held literacy classes for people who never really had any education.

All this we believe is Christian responsibility. If such services are not available in the community of the poor then the church must seek to assist in this area. It is by no surprise we learn that churches established the first schools and hospitals. It is God's desire that we be turned into better and more able people. The church in Isipingo Farm thus attempted to bring about social transformation in its community.

5.2.4.6 *Other Religions*

We pointed out in chapter three that the majority of people in Isipingo Farm are not Christians. Whilst we have stressed the need for the church to be involved in the social, economic and political concerns of the Isipingo Farm community yet we must also stress that this should not be our only concern. The church it was not called into Isipingo Farm to be social-workers, economists and politicians. They are called to be Christians. They are there to proclaim Jesus Christ and to bring Isipingo Farm under the "Kingdom of God". They are called to be the salt and the light in Isipingo Farm, sharing and leading others to Christ, the 'king' in the 'kingdom'. This is the view adopted in ministry in Isipingo Farm, but what does it have to say about the church's relationship with the other faiths in the community?

The church in the Isipingo Farm community did not seem to work with the other religious bodies in the community, except for occasional community marches and protest against the civil authorities. This is rather unfortunate. In addressing the needs of the poor it is important to join hands with others in order to be more effective. A people-centred approach to development accepts religious pluralism. In any particular local community Christians and people of other faiths are held together by cultural values that hold in common. Those who share the same cultural symbol system, however, may belong to different religious traditions, as in the case of Isipingo Farm. Increasingly, people may live in a single family in which immediate relatives belong to different faiths. Hence the urgent need for the building up of responsible and creative relationship with people who belong to different religious traditions.

Perhaps we should ask the question, "Why does the Christian Church need to work with other faiths?" Firstly, because the Christian faith is communitarian at its core. The fundamental affirmation of the church is that Jesus Christ frees and unites, binds people in a community of love: "For God so loved the World" (John 3:16). This text points us to the fact that God, in Jesus Christ, came for the whole world and thus his love does not have any limits. An essential dimension of the trinitarian vision of God in Christian faith is to affirm that God is community, that reality is in itself relational. How then can Christians testify to the basic tenet of their faith

that God's love is inclusive and reconciling and whose central purpose is to unite all things in Christ (Eph.1:9)? What then is the nature of community that Christians may seek with their neighbour of other faiths in a locale?

Stanley Samartha states that there are three possibilities. "*First* is to envisage the community Christians seek as an enlargement of their own community leading to a corresponding diminution of other communities."⁴⁴ In this expansionistic approach, universality becomes nothing but the extension of one's own particularity. Such an attitude has dogged Christian tradition ever since Constantine leading to the crusades. This exclusivistic approach to our neighbours of other faiths is contrary to the spirit of Christ. I find such a view non-compatible with a people-centred approach to theology and development.

Working toward a form of artificial synthesis of selected elements from various faiths in order to produce "a world faith" is a *second* possibility, suggests Samartha.⁴⁵ Herein is a claim for a form of community that denies room for identity of any community, including itself. This view certainly does not take plurality seriously nor thus it respect the individual rights of people to preserve their identity and be themselves. Again, such a view does not favour a people-centred approach to development.

The *third* possibility to which Samartha points is the seeking together a "community-of-communities," which does not eliminate different identities but holds them together within the living structure of a differentiated unity.⁴⁶ This approach to our neighbours of other faiths which affirms the distinct identities of other religious traditions and yet works towards a mutually enriching community demands a culture of dialogue. But it is a culture of dialogue wherein our giving of an unequivocal witness to God's love in Jesus Christ is called for. It recognises that both witness and dialogue presuppose two-way relationships. Such a witness does not preclude dialogue but invites it, and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it.

⁴⁴ See CHRISTOPHER DURASINGH (Ed.), *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 84, Geneva: WCC, April 1996, p.160.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.161.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.162.

Hence the Church should work with other faiths because of its strong concept of community.

Secondly, the church should work with other faiths because of its understanding of the "Kingdom of God". We do not perceive this 'kingdom' as a mere spiritual entity. We have pointed out elsewhere that we understand the "kingdom of God" to be the establishment of social, political and economic justice as well. In order to achieve this, it is imperative that the Church join forces with all those who work towards the same.

This points us to the third reason why the church needs to work with other faiths. The church needs to join with those who identify themselves with the struggles of the poor and exploited in the world. Jesus identified with the poor in his ministry on earth and he worked with all those who took an interest in the plight of the poor. Similarly, the church needs to embrace the interests of the poor in this way too. In our research, St Anthony's Church in particular, expresses an openness to work with all people and organisations and other faiths to bring about the humanisation of life. If the Christian church is to truly adopt a people-centred approach to development it is necessary that it accepts such a position as well. It can do so even without compromising or diluting its faith.

The church must realise that its fight is not against other faiths but against poverty and oppression. With this in mind as it works with other faiths in the struggles of the poor, it should encourage religious dialogue. We must be prepared to listen, share and work with each other. Perhaps we will not be able to reach a compromise in our faith but, at least, we could work together on social, political and economical issues. Such a view is what favours a people-centred approach to development.

5.2.4.7 *Summary*

In this section have attempted to outline and discuss a few principles for mission with the poor in Isipingo Farm. We have examined the socio-economic, religious and political conditions prevalent in the Isipingo Farm community and then we have attempted to show how one can

minister the Christian gospel in the given situation. Our plea here is for directed research. There should be no more random, hit-and-miss mission methods. There should be a measure of faithful goal setting, after the essential needs of the people in the situation have been determined. In that sense the research on which this study is based can be regarded as a model which can be copied in every micro-situation that speaks of the poor.

Every situation is, of course, unique and it therefore needs its own description. However, it would be true to say that the conditions described in Isipingo Farm are typical of all poor communities throughout South Africa. It would therefore follow that the methods for mission applied in Isipingo Farm could be used among South Africa's poor to some considerable measure. We shall see this as we continue to examine another poor community from a different racial grouping.

This case study is a good example of the process a local church could use to assess needs within a community. It is essential that the needs are what the local people express themselves and not what the development worker or pastor perceives or assumes. In doing a thorough analysis of the socio-economic, political and religious conditions of the Isipingo Farm Community, the local church has been able to ascertain the needs of the community and thereby offer a relevant ministry. The central focus of this church's development work is the involvement and participation of the local people in the development of their own future. From this perspective, the people-centred approach to development is noticed. It is further demonstrated in the attempt to conscientise and empower the poor. This can be seen in some of the projects and activities it has engaged within the community. However, what can be observed here is a focus on attempting to develop the person only. It must be pointed out that to simply develop the person without also at the same time seeking to change the structures that oppress and dehumanise them cannot be considered to be a true approach to a people-centred development. Liberation theology in particular has taught us this with its special emphasis on praxis. Any attempts at development must take seriously the need for the liberation and emancipation of the poor from oppressive structures and powers.

Whilst the attempts of the church in Isipingo Farm to confront unjust structures can be noted, they did not sufficiently address the quest for liberation. The lack of networking with other churches, religions, institutions, government and organisations made it very difficult for this local church to make a significant impact on the development of the community itself. Although its focus is on human development, its impact in the community has been mostly on the social and moral level and not so much on the political and economic level. The liberation paradigm of development insists on the inclusion of the latter as well.

5.3 CASE STUDY TWO: THE MOSES MAREN MISSION

5.3.1 Geographical Background

The Olifantsvlei community is situated in the South of Johannesburg. It consists of three adjacent farming communities: Skottie Pola, Makakhulu Skop and Masgund (New Farm). These names are what the local people have given to the respective farms. However, put together they are all known as Olifantsvlei Farm.

5.3.2 Problems within the Community

The community is faced with a number of problems not very different from the Isipingo Farm community we have looked at in the previous section. It seems that most poor communities in South Africa experience similar problems though different aspects may be emphasised e.g. housing, health, education, etc. We shall now look at some of the problems experienced in the Olifantsvlei Farm Community.

5.3.2.1 Housing

The majority of people live in one or two roomed houses described as 'shacks'. They are renting the property from the landlord or, as in some cases, from the City Council. Those who live in the houses owned by the City Council usually have properly constructed houses even though they are

small. The majority of people are very unhappy about their present accommodation. The dominant reasons given for this dissatisfaction related to the poor quality and size of the houses.

The lack of rooms and space results in parents and children sleeping together. Each household has between 4 to 7 children, excluding the parents and relatives, who often live there as well. Needless to say there was no space for privacy, rest and study.

When asked, 'What do you think should be done to solve the housing problem in the community?' Among other reasons given, the most dominant response laid blame on the past apartheid government: "We were dumped here by the government and now they have forgotten about us." Clearly most of our respondents see the government as the answer to the housing problem

5.3.2.2 *Services and Facilities*

The perceived needs in the community, among others, include problems such as accessibility to shops, lack of public transport, no money for transport, no medical facilities or doctors, no sporting or recreational facilities and no money for food.

When asked what were the essential needs of the households at Olifantsvlei Farm, the following were given:

Item	Olifantsvlei
Water	92
Security of Tenure	76,1
Electricity	88
Sanitation	61,5
Roads/Streets/Pavements/Drainage	61,5
Schools/Creches	61
Recreation Facilities	83,2
Community Facilities (Clinics, Temples)	77
Public Transport	95
Commercial Facilities (Markets, Shops, Garages)	68,3

Although the community does not have electricity and water connected to their houses, they did not see this as the most essential need. It is not because they did not consider this important as their response shows, "(even) if we had it, where would we get the money to pay for it?" Such services would be a financial burden. This indicates a sad state of affairs. What we see here is an acceptance of one's life conditions.

The greatly perceived needs in the community relate to public transport and the lack of educational and recreational facilities for the children. The lack of transport is an essential concern. Not only does it prevent movement from one place to another, it also limits people's exposure to the better living conditions of others. The end result is that people tend to accept their conditions without posing serious questions on the injustices they face.

The concern for the children in the community is a major one. As our respondents put it, "Our children have nothing!" "This is not a developed area at all. What future do they have?" "They cannot achieve like others. They never make the TV (news)." Clearly, parents are very concerned about the future of their children.

5.3.2.3 *Social Problems*

The Olifantsvlei community is faced with many social problems. According to those interviewed, the most serious social problem was to be found in the heavy drinking in the community. When asked why this was the case, the frequent response given was "because we like to drown (forget) our problems." It is inevitable that such excessive drinking is going to cause further problems in the community. This is seen in the regular fights that take place among people and usually drinking partners in the area. Such drinking also results in serious family and marital friction. Drugs do not seem to be a serious problem in the community nor is gangsterism. However, of high concern is the high rate of teenage pregnancies, which is perceived to be around 64%. This also resulted in a number of teenage girls dropping out of school earlier than they should have.

5.3.2.4 *Education*

There is only one school in the community that caters for both primary and secondary education, they run independently. There are too few classrooms for the 700 pupils that attend the primary school. The classrooms are also very small resulting in overcrowding. It is often difficult for teachers to function under such circumstances. According to the teachers at the school, the following are the major problems faced at the school:

- Hunger: There are many parents who place their children here just for food. They are not so concerned about their education as much as they are about not seeing their children starve. The school provides lunch for the children on a daily basis.
- School fees and books: Most parents are unable to pay these because they are either unemployed or have too little income.
- School uniforms: Most parents are unable to afford this. Many children come to school without jerseys in the winter.
- Discipline: Is an issue because many children live with step- parents or relatives.
- The absence of electricity and overcrowding in the household makes it difficult for children to do homework or pursue further self -study.
- Over-aged pupils at the school who have to be accommodated.

5.3.2.5 *The Religious Life of the Community*

All those interviewed adhered to the Christian faith. We probed to see if there were any other religions in the community but we were not able to determine this. Our respondents were presented with fixed response alternatives in the following way:

- 1st "feeling close to God"
- 2nd "feeling moved and inspired by the Spirit of the Lord"
- 3rd "feeling comforted and secure"
- 4th "finding Jesus and being saved"

- 5th "working for social reform and justice in our country"
- 6th "feeling confident and stronger"
- 7th "helping to think deeply about oneself"
- 8th "feeling one has to do ones duty"
- 9th "a place to be with good friends and people"
- 10th "something interesting to do."

Although the majority of people were deeply close to God, only about 30% indicated that they were regular church-goers. We deliberately presented our respondents with a list of negative statements to gain insight into perceived shortcomings of the churches. The results were as follows:

	% Agree
Does not take enough interest in the social problems of the community	60
Does not help one enough with personal problems and difficulties	56
A little dull and interesting	36
Too concerned about raising funds	77
Does not give a feeling of togetherness with fellow worshippers	38
Does not help one to feel saved and feel the spirit of Jesus	38
Does not help one feel deep faith and closeness to God	38
A little out of date and old fashioned	52
Any other response	31

The greatest dissatisfaction expressed by our respondents concerning the church is its focus on fundraising and relevance to their needs. Whilst they saw the church addressing the social and political issues in the community, they believed that the church could do more. The focus on fundraising was probably attributed to the fact that the church had to pay its minister and also support various projects.

In response to the question, "What is the purpose of the Church?" our respondents gave the following answers:

- to develop people spiritually

- to teach and develop us morally
- to teach us the word of God
- to help make us fully human
- to help us in our struggle against evil and evil people.

It can be seen from this that our respondents see the function of the church as to develop people spiritually and morally. However, of great significance is its function to help people in their struggle to be fully human. In doing this, the church is expected to fight against evil structures and people who deny them their humanity. Their struggle is a very serious and necessary part of their spirituality. In this sense it is perceived a little differently from the poor in the Isipingo Farm community.

5.3.2.6 Political Leadership

The dominant political party in the community is the African National Congress (ANC). Whilst all of our interviewees were able to tell us about the leaders on the national level of the ANC, none were able to name their local leaders. There is a general perception that the new government is not doing anything for them. This can be observed in the following comments, "They don't look after us," "We have not seen any improvements since 1994, we were promised so much," "We still don't have proper houses, water or lights in them," "We are suffering but we must still pay taxes," "Look at the Premier, he can pay R200 for a single meal and we have nothing." It is apparent, from all these, that there is a deep frustration with the political and civic leaders in the area.

We shall now turn to examine the role played by the Moses Maren Mission to help develop the Olifantsvlei Farm community.

5.3.3 Developing the community: The Moses Maren Mission

Pastor Moses Maren and his wife, Vishvarani who sacrificially gave themselves to the Lord's work, founded the Moses Maren Mission. Pastor Moses explains how this came about:⁴⁷

... Before taking up the ministry and religious life we both went up to Johannesburg in 1993 to take up a lucrative job in commerce and industry. The job was indeed lucrative and all was going well. In 1986 came the divine call of God in our lives to serve the poor, needy and destitute. I disobeyed the call of God because I was not pleased with the "job description" given from the Lord. Furthermore I strongly felt that I had a good job; company car, company house, an office in the main street of Johannesburg and a good salary with wonderful friends and therefore there was no need for me to follow a disciplined religious life through the divine call of God. I became very sick. I was diagnosed with a leaking heart. I went to a faith healer (pastor) who prayed in the name of Jesus and I was healed. The cardiologist confirmed that the hole is not visible in the heart anymore and that I should go and live a normal life. I continued to live normally and dedicated my life to commerce and industry. The divine call from God came again. I disobeyed the call once again, you see because things always went on so well with me at the job and the surroundings. I did not want to leave this easy and beautiful life to follow the Lord's call by going into some desert and bushes to work for the Lord. The call of God came again to me. I disobeyed the call again. All of a sudden I became sick - I mean my body was sick enough to die. I was rushed to the hospital where they discovered that the hole had reopened and an emergency open-heart surgery was performed. Whilst I was in the ICU I heard again the voice of the Lord calling me to do his work. From a sick bed with oxygen and breathing pipes, blood supplying apparatus and other types of medical machines all around me, I responded positive to the Lord - I replied to the Lord from a frail, faint and sick voice-saying, "Yes Lord, I

⁴⁷ Personal interview conducted in June 2000.

will do your work." Immediately my eyes opened, I was glad I made it - I was back in this world. This divine call and experience with God has immediately given birth to Moses Maren Mission.

It is clear from Pastor Maren's testimony that his involvement with the poor people was directly related to his faith relationship with God. His constant reference to the divine call upon his life indicates that he was involved with the poor in the rural community of Olifantsvlei Farm because of God. Hence, everything he attempted in this community was geared toward leading people into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Divine direction and guidance was always sought through prayer and God's word. And whenever the Lord's word became clear to him, Pastor Maren simply acted. This often took place without consultation with the local community. A project of some kind was undertaken and when completed the local people were invited to share in its benefits and blessings. Pastor Maren points out that in the terrible days of apartheid this was the way it was done. He is quick to admit that such cannot be done today in the new South Africa.

Such a philosophy of development does not favour a people-centred approach to development. Pastor Moses was wrong in the following ways: Firstly, he assumed the needs in the community because God showed them to him instead of finding out from the people. Secondly, he took the initiative without consulting with the community. Their views and ideas were not considered necessary in the development of their own community. Thirdly, they were 'forced' to accept these projects because it was intended for them in the first place. The frustrations of not having any say in the development projects within the community were clearly expressed by many.

What we see here is the paternalistic attitude towards the poor that embraces the conservative and liberal paradigms in development (modernisation). In essence, what it advocates is *working for* the poor instead of *working with* them. Charles Elliott states that such a theory of development (modernisation) assumes that poor people stay poor because they are backward, stupid, lazy, disorganised and incompetent.⁴⁸ The process and philosophy of development used in the

⁴⁸ CHARLES ELLIOTT, *Comfortable Compassion?* Op. cit., p.48.

Olifantsvlei community is not one that one could implement in the new South Africa. Our new democracy calls for a greater involvement of the people in the decision making process of their own future.

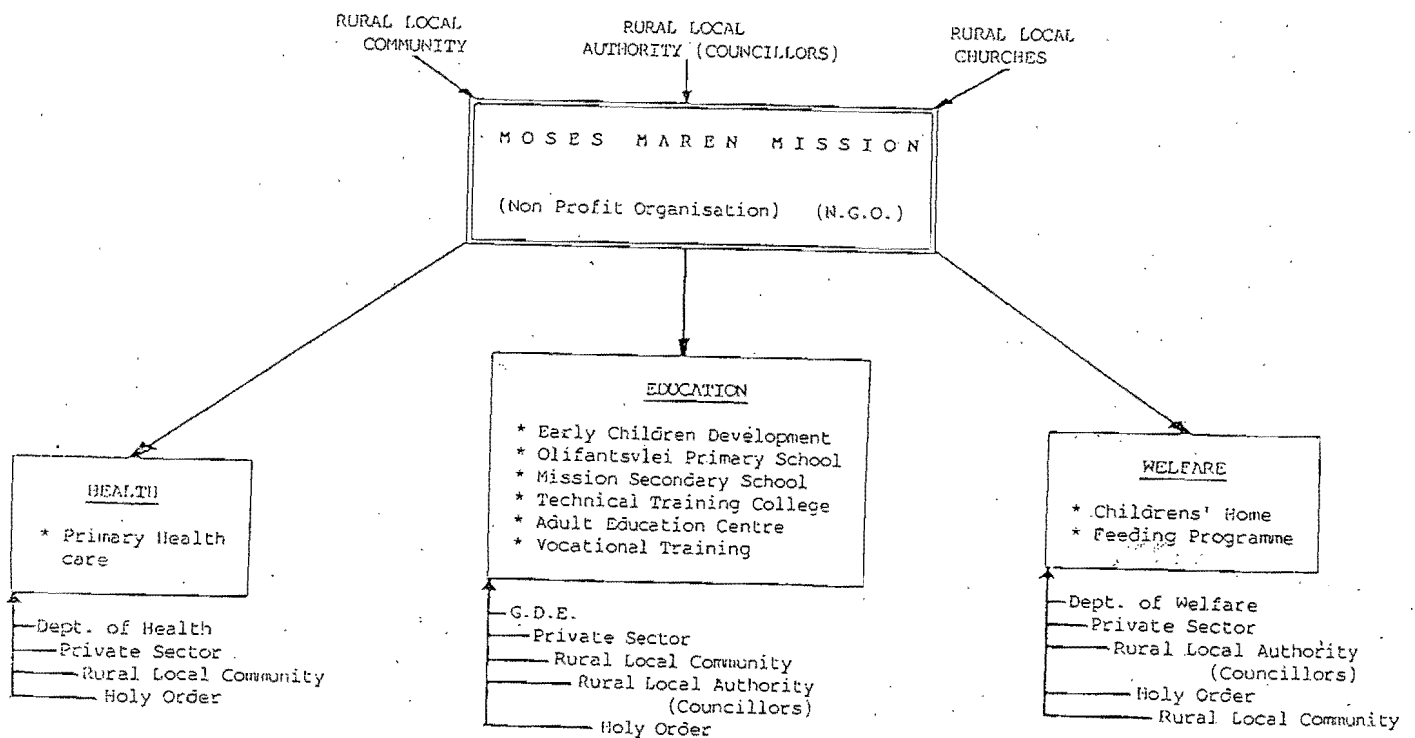
The development of a community must take seriously the *participation* of the local people in the decision making process and activity of transforming society. This was also the mistake of the early missionaries who came to South Africa. They failed to take seriously the views, beliefs and practices of the indigenous people, instead in the name of God they went about doing things for the people. Whilst this in many ways helped to develop the communities in which they were found, yet it also had a negative impact- in the case of the white missionaries it brought with it colonialism and western influence in development ideology. The need for local people to be more involved in the identification of problems, planning of solutions, and the implementation, management and evaluation of programmes, is very essential. These can undoubtedly feed into a more people-centred approach to development.

The most essential needs in the community according to Pastor Moses and other members of the community were religious and educational. There were absolutely no churches or schools in the area. As a result, people were not taught the word nor were they educated for a better and brighter life. The majority of people were destined to become labourers or domestics on the farms of the white farmers. These were the abused, neglected and forgotten people without any hope of a better future. The end result was a community plagued by child abuse because of overcrowding and the lack of privacy in homes, drug trafficking, abuse of women, over-aged uneducated children, and alcohol abuse. The church could not remain idle in this situation of oppression, abuse and injustice. How does the church proclaim the good news in such a context?

The Moses Maren Mission states the following as its aim:

The Mission was established by divine intervention and faith in God to cater for the poor, needy and destitute children and persons of the rural areas South of Johannesburg.

My claim that the Moses Maren Mission is taking a paternalistic attitude towards the poor is further supported in the above Mission Statement, expressed more clearly in the words: "to *cater for the poor.*" It misses the significance of *working with* the poor. It is here that we see the notion of progress rather than empowerment. The Christian church needs to be very conscious of how it does development. The biblical approach, as seen in the example of Jesus, is one that takes people seriously, especially the poor. With this mission statement in mind the following strategic plan was set to help realise the aim of the mission.



In attempting to fulfill its mission, the Moses Maren Mission sees a need to work with the local community, local authorities and local churches. It sees in this a partnership to help address the needs of the poor in the community. This is a very vital aspect in doing community development, we shall return to this later. The Moses Maren Mission sees itself focusing on three aspects of development in the community: health, education and welfare. In each of these areas it aims to draw in the support of the community, local councillors and churches.

5.3.4 Projects

In attempting to develop the Olifantsvlei community, the Moses Maren Mission undertook the following projects:

5.3.4.1 *Worship Community*

Sunday services and weekday meetings are conducted to teach people about God and God's will for them. This has enabled people to seek a new way of life filled with purpose and future prospects. It has also addressed the spiritual and moral aspects in developing people, as our respondents established the need for this. Examples were given to us by our interviewees of radical changes that were brought about in the behavioural patterns and conduct of individuals within the community. It has greatly enhanced the moral fabric of the society resulting in a significant drop in the number of crimes, murders and rapes in the community. Development in this context is seriously connected with spirituality. God wants us to be better people. This greatly encourages the hope of the community.

5.3.4.2 *Education*

In addressing the need for education the Mission started a pre-school and primary school in a small cow stable. The Primary School started with 1 teacher and 40 pupils and today it has grown to 20 classrooms, 3 administration offices, a feeding kitchen and a hall. It currently has 700 pupils and 20 teachers. This development has subsequently led to the establishment of a Technical Training Secondary School adjacent to the Primary School. The land for these schools was provided by the government due through the intervention of the local Council Authority and the negotiations of Prof. Rudolf who was at that time Mayor of Johannesburg. The funding for the erection of the buildings came from the private sector at the persuasion of the Mission. Pastor Maren relates the difficulty they experienced with the old Department of Education and Training (DET):

The policy was one teacher for the farm school. When we started the Technical School they were not very supportive because they were afraid that the local people will become skilled and therefore refuse to work on the farms as labourers and domestics anymore.

In response to the question, *How did you go about attempting to start the schools?* Pastor Maren outlined a four-fold process:

1. He attempted to gather support from the local people pointing out to them the benefits of education and the need for schools in the community.
2. The Department of Education and Training was approached to provide the teachers for the schools, textbooks and other necessary technical support. Today the Department pays the salary of 55 teachers.
3. Key people in the Council of Johannesburg were approached for gathering support for the buildings.
4. People and businesses in the private sector were approached for funding.

It must be pointed out, however, that the Mission only got the local people involved in the actual building of the schools. They were not part of the decision making process in determining the need for the schools. As one of our respondents put it: "They didn't ask us they just told us that they were building the schools." In such a situation the poor simply become the instruments of participation, meaning that they are used to help get a job done cost effectively. The people's participation may therefore be necessary to provide the labour for local infrastructure. This kind of participation is not transformative in itself since it fails to include the poor people in determining their own needs and problems, finding their own solutions and participating in the decision making process of their own future. Such an approach does not find favour with a people-centred approach to development.

5.3.4.3 *Buildings*

The local people were used to build the schools, church, clinic and the other facilities of the mission. A qualified builder and architect was responsible to oversee the building whilst the local people provided the labour. They were employed on a daily basis. Hence instead of remaining idle they were able to earn a little income and perhaps more importantly acquire a skill. At the end of the building project they were given a certificate by Murray and Roberts to state that they had received training in a specific area, e.g. electrical, plumbing, bricklaying, and carpentry. This subsequently provided employment for many of the community folk outside of the farms and in other areas that were not open to them before. Some of our interviewees pointed to themselves as those who had benefitted through these building projects. The fact that they were able to get employment helped to alleviate poverty and hunger within the community. The building project created a great sense of community among the people. It further encouraged their sense of pride and joy that they could share in this opportunity of building their schools, even though they were not part of the original decision to build them. It is no surprise then that when these schools opened they were destined for success and participation by both parents and children. Development projects can only enjoy a sense of "ownership" when people are allowed to participate in the building of their own community. People tend to appreciate things a lot more when they have discovered what it means to work hard for it.

5.3.4.4 *Health*

There were no medical facilities in the community. The community folk had to travel far to receive primary health care. As a result many children did not receive the necessary immunisation and became sick very frequently. People in the community reported to us that a number of children never reached adulthood. The church could not remain neutral in this situation. As Pastor Maren put it, "Life is given to us by God, and it is our responsibility to help sustain and care for that life. Every life is precious to God, should it not also be to the church?"

Hence, the Moses Maren Mission was responsible for the establishment of a clinic within the community. Pastor Maren negotiated with the old Department of Health who eventually sent in nurses two days a week. The Mission found volunteer nursing sisters from other churches outside of the area to come serve the medical needs of the community on the remaining days. Presently, the government is fully involved with the clinic - paying the salaries of the sisters and providing the necessary medical equipment.

5.3.4.5 Welfare

The church has also attempted to address the social and welfare needs of the community. A Children's Home was built for the homeless and destitute children. It has also become a shelter for abused and neglected children. There are many parents who, for various reasons, are not able to provide a suitable learning environment for their children - because education is one of the major concerns for the church - it provides accommodation for such children. The intent of the church is to provide a better and brighter future for these young ones. These children are offered the chance to continue their education with the provision of a warm bed and meal on a daily basis. The major achievement of this programme is that it has enabled the forgotten and neglected children an opportunity to now compete with the more advantaged children in the suburbs. Pastor Maren proudly shares a story of one of the boys that emerged from the Home: "Joseph Zwane is one of our pupils who went through both our primary and secondary schools. Today he is a bright young man studying political science in the University of Wits." Some of the parents, however, do not see it in the same light. Whilst they may praise the schools and the church for what they are doing, they do not see a bright future for their children because of their living conditions and the disadvantages they suffer in comparison to other more privileged communities.

5.3.4.6 Agricultural Self-Help Programme

A garden has been established through the aid of sponsors. The sisters and children from the home are responsible for growing crop, mainly maize and mixed vegetables. The produce is

eventually sold and the income used to run the home. This agricultural programme is used to provide self-sustaining income for the home. This project is also used to teach skills to the children and adults in the community so that they never have to go hungry or suffer because of unemployment. It is intended to increase self-reliance and economic growth. A further advantage is that this project helps them to respect the earth and its resources.

The Department of Agriculture has invested greatly in this project. They helped to dig up the bore-hole and provided the fencing for it. They also provided the technical services and advice for the development of the project. In the very near future a milk dairy is to be established.

These job creation and self-help programmes are commendable but a serious question remains: "Are they sustainable?" Sustainability is an important aspect of development. Many development projects fail to continue when its donors withdraw their financial support. Whenever a church embarks on development projects within a community it must give serious consideration to the need of sustainability. The Moses Maren Mission seems to be too heavily reliant on donors.

5.3.4.7 *Water*

The community did not have any water or electricity. Water is a basic necessity for any individual, family or community. The local folk drew unhygienic water from the Klip Rivier. This resulted in the outbreak of diseases. The church made representations to the Local Council stressing the need for clean and pure water to be brought nearer to the community. The availability of water improves the general outlook of individuals and families. As a result of the church's persistence in this matter, good clean water was eventually made available and accessible to the community, but not in the households. The community still does not have electricity in the households.

5.3.5 The Role of the Church

When asked why the church should be involved in the areas of health, education and welfare, Pastor Moses responded with the following comment:

This was and is the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a teacher. Wherever he went he taught the people about God's Kingdom. He gave them a new teaching. He taught them the truth about life in God and life without God. He taught them the skills for life. Teaching comes from the church. This is why we built the schools. We have an obligation to teach people – especially the Word. The Bible tells us that we must take care of the poor, orphans and needy. This is our God-given responsibility. That's why we built the Children's Home. As far as health is concerned, did Jesus not say: "I have not come for those who are well but for those who are sick." Jesus went about healing the sick, lame, blind and cripple. Should the church not do the same? Health is very much our business. The church is a life of mission because Christ was a missionary. Christ was a type of a person meant for everybody. Therefore mission must be open to all [people].

As pointed out earlier, the people in the Olifantsvlei Community, those interviewed, see the Church playing a very vital role in addressing their basic human needs in order to survive. Although they state that the church is called upon to develop the community spiritually and morally, this is not without addressing the socio-political and economic needs in the community: "If the Church does not take up our cause, who else can we turn to?"

It is very clear from the above comments that the church is called to be the presence of Christ in the world. It has the responsibility to do what Christ did and be what Christ was when he was on earth. The ministry of the church ought to be the same as that of Christ. Jesus spoke out against injustice and oppressive structures and he challenged the powers that be. He called for a new transformed society. The church is challenged to do the same. It is very evident that the work of the Moses Maren Mission attempted to bring about such transformation to the Olifantsvlei Farm

Community. However, not all the projects implemented by the church empowered and enabled people to secure a better life.

We put the following questions to the local people: "*what do you think about God and the church?*" They responded with the following answers:

"We love God. See what he has done for us. He has brought us schools, jobs, food and he has helped us to care for our children"

"Jesus is involved in our lives. He cares for our needs through the church"

"The church has given us hope and Jesus has given us a new way of life. We have dignity and peace. I don't know what I would do without God in my life."

"I know that I can trust in God. I rely on Him for everything. He has helped me in all my needs."

More specific responses to the question, "*Who is Jesus for you?*" were: "The Son of God", "The Creator", "Jesus forgives me", "My Healer and Doctor", "Jesus is bread", "Jesus is Water", "Jesus is Food", "Jesus is my Saviour", "Jesus is the way and the truth" and "Jesus sets me free".

These are descriptions of how the poor in this community see Jesus. I shall discuss this further in Chapter Six.

The above comments indicate that the local people have associated God as the provider and supplier of their needs. Of course, this is so because of the work of the church within the community. They have a tremendous love and respect for Jesus because he cares for them. The teachers in the Mission School expressed that this love and devotion to Jesus are clearly evident in the lives of the children in the schools. They meet daily during school intervals for prayer and bible studies. In the words of the principal of the Primary School:

There is a very strong 'culture of prayer' among the students. They take their God and faith very seriously because they have experienced the love of Jesus through the ministry

of the church. For them, God has taken them out of oppression, poverty and hunger. He has provided education and opportunities of a better life and future. This is their salvation. God has rescued them.

For Pastor Maren, salvation is not limited to the mere saving of souls. He points out that, "this type of salvation is not just an "I" and "Thou" relationship nor is it a "me" and "God" thing.

Salvation has a sense of community - it involves political, economic and social aspects as well. It is not a pie in the sky type of relationship but a concrete involvement of God with His people rescuing them from oppression."

Whilst it is the church's task in Olifantsvlei to lead people to Christ it does this in a practical and visible way. The church here attempts to demonstrate the presence and power of God in the struggles of the people. God is with them and he also struggles with them - this is how He reveals himself to them.

5.3.6 Partnership

The Moses Maren Mission shared a very close partnership with the government in attempting to address the needs within the local community in which it is found. The government has supplied personnel, equipment and funding for the different projects. When asked if the church should work in such a close way with the government Pastor Moses responded, "As far as it means the upliftment of the poor I would say, absolutely. For example, as far as the schools are concerned the government provides the education and the church encourages the spiritual and moral formation." It is in our opinion that the successful achievements of the Mission are largely as a result of such a partnership with both government and the private sector.

We asked the Mission, *Would you say that you are involved in development?* "Definitely yes," was the response. "Our church is essentially a community development organisation with special emphasis on education, humanitarian and welfare, and the suffering of the people around us. Our

aim is to develop the whole person and in this sense we are involved in human development. We want to help produce a sustained and balanced human being who is able to have a brighter future. "We probed further if there was a theology behind all of this and the answer we were given, "this is the life of Christ himself." From this it is apparent that the major concentration is on addressing the needs and sufferings prevalent in the community because this is what Jesus did and he also expects the church to do the same. It can be observed from this that a theology of development is about praxis. It is about changing the social, political and economic conditions of the exploited poor. It is a theology that addresses the need of liberation of those impoverished through socio-political and economic domination.

To our question: *Do you think that the church in South Africa is involved with the poor?* Pastor Maren answered with the following comment:

The Roman Catholic Church must be given much credit for this. Personally I'm not well informed about others [denominations]. However, these days I do hear of churches starting mission, life and work departments - if those are the correct words. I do believe that the church's hierarchical structures are a hindrance to development. They are too rigid, ruled and regulated - this makes it impossible for projects that empower the poor to get off the ground. Responding to the same question Pako Setai and Lilian Thenjiwe said quite emphatically, "No, definitely not I"

5.3.7 Summary

The Moses Maren Mission has many developmental programmes that seem to have benefited the community. It has done incredible work to address the need of education in particular. It is an excellent example of how a small local church can creatively and proactively address major needs within a community.

However, the process and philosophy of development used in this context is not one that one could easily implement in the new South Africa. Our new democracy calls for a greater

involvement of the people in the decision making process of their own future. The Moses Maren Mission did not involve the local people in identifying their own problems, finding their own solutions and actively changing their own community. The local people, in most cases, were simply co-opted on to the programmes and projects of the local church. The church is attempting to do the work *for* the poor rather than *with* them. Such an approach does not help to restore dignity and self-worth in people. This can be described as the modernisation approach to development rather than a people-centred approach. It is only when people have the freedom to make their own decisions and the right to participate in the making of their own future can they be truly empowered.

Nevertheless, this case study is an indication of how the church can get involved in the transformation of community and people. Some of its development projects are aimed at eradicating poverty and encouraging self-reliance. It stresses the need for partnership and networking with others in attempting to address the plight of the poor. It is a good indication of the impact a church can have in its endeavour to transform society.

5.4 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

Even though each of the communities examined were very different, yet they seem to have common needs. Some of the most essential needs identified are: education, unemployment, housing, water, electricity, family life, moral issues, children, orphans and hunger. All the needs expressed had some bearing on economic, social and political factors. It is interesting to note that each of these two churches attempted to address all the needs within the community at the same time majoring on one or two of those needs. I shall now outline some of the salient characteristics that point to a theology of development, embodied in these churches that are involved in community development. My intent here is only to point out these observations, they will be further developed and critiqued in the next chapter as I attempt a theology of development. As these churches got involved in the development and social transformation of the community the following trends seem to emerge which speaks to a theology of development:

1. They all take seriously an *identification* with the poor. They believe that it is their Christian duty to be involved in the transforming of individuals and their society. The Church cannot simply continue with business as usual when the majority of its people are faced with hunger and poverty brought about by exploitation and domination by the rich and powerful. These churches point out the need for the Church to be involved in the daily needs and concerns of the people. They teach us that the ministry of the Church is about people. Jesus showed a particular concern for people, especially the poor ones. Jesus identified with the poor who were oppressed and exploited socially, politically and economically. He took up their cause for justice and equality as he challenged the structures and people who oppressed the poor, the Scribes and the Pharisees in particular. Hence, these churches tell us that, like Jesus, the Church must identify itself with the poor and the needy. However, identification must involve concrete action to transform the condition and circumstances of the poor. This is what these local churches attempted to do as they address the needs of the poor in their communities.
2. In addressing the *human needs* within the community, these churches take seriously the economic and social political reality of the context. They believe that the Church's mission must be extended into these areas as well. They believe that it is their Christian duty to be involved in the sufferings and experiences of the poor. Jesus himself was poor (materially) and he lived and worked among the poor. Hence this is a mandate for the Christian church as well. The Church cannot ignore human needs nor remain detached from human suffering. The Church is the community of Christ reaching out to the community in which it is found both in words and deeds. The Church has, as they see it, a biblical obligation to take sides with the poor - that is the side Jesus took. Hence, they identify the needs of the poor within the community and attempt to address them relevantly.
3. Their focus on attempting social transformation is embedded in the need to restore *human dignity*.⁴⁹ Dignity as we have seen in the case studies is central to a definition of

⁴⁹ See the appendices for examples of how they attempted to restore human dignity.

development. However, as we have shown, some of the processes they use in their development programmes sometimes do not encourage the fostering of such dignity. For example we have shown this in the case of The Moses Maren Mission.⁵⁰ The process itself is not transformative. Perhaps the reasons for this is that these churches are using models and theories of development that describe a paternalistic and modernisation approach.

4. Their Pastors preferred not to draw a distinction between development and evangelism. They, however struggle to link the two.⁵¹ Some view development as an opportunity for evangelism. Others believe that both are interconnected and inseparable. In this context we have asked if advocating justice and ministering to the poor, sick, naked, hungry, and oppressed, is this not in itself good news?⁵² In essence, most of these churches view proclamation and praxis as integral aspects in the ministry of the church.
5. They have a much broader understanding of the concept of salvation that extends beyond the spiritual to include social, economic and political aspects of a person's life. However, the spiritual aspect is quite dominant and transcends all aspects of their Christian involvement with the community. The interest is not just in personal salvation but also in community development and transformation. The primary focus is not on conversion but on transformation of individuals and community to reflect the reign of God. However, salvation understood in the sense of conversion is also very prevalent but it is usually coupled with developmental work and programmes.
6. They have a very Christocentric focus to development and social transformation of individuals and their community. They are primarily involved in this because Jesus requires that they be. In attempting to bring about social transformation they see themselves as actually bearing witness to their Lord, Jesus Christ.⁵³ However their aim is

⁵⁰ See pp. 213.

⁵¹ See pp. 183-185, 369, 376 and 385 in this study.

⁵² See pp. 183 – 185 again.

⁵³ See the interviews with Pastors on this as well as in Appendices 3A-C. They all indicated the same.

not (exclusively) Christianisation or conversion but a reflection of the character, mission and love of Jesus. Their aim is to mirror the presence of Christ by working towards the establishment of justice and peace within the community. This is usually embraced in the attempt to 'love the neighbour' by expressing acts of mercy and compassion.

7. The goal of mission, for these churches, is the bringing in of the reign of God. Such a 'kingdom' is characterised by the establishment of peace and socio-political and economic justice on earth. It is not a mere spiritual 'Kingdom' as many Christian churches tend to see it even today. Hence, mission in these churches involves both liberation and humanisation of the poor. It is a conscious attempt to enable and empower the poor to become fully human. Hence, these churches and Pastors, in particular, seem to have a ministry focus that is 'Kingdom' centred. Their primary focus is not ecclesiocentric, that is, their essential task is not to build the local church even though that is necessary as well. Their focus is to bring in the "kingdom of God"- to extend the sovereign rule of God on earth. Whilst taking eschatology seriously, they focus on present history and reality. Their aim is to direct their present reality into the will of God: "Let thy kingdom come on earth". Their vision of the 'kingdom' inspires their vision for the community or city. And so they work towards the establishment of a new society that reflects the love of God. The spirit of ecumenism is dying in South Africa partly because far too many pastors are too "parish" centred instead of being 'Kingdom' (community) minded. As Christians we are not called to create a *new church* but to participate in the creation of a *new world* - as God sees it. It is the task of the church to bring about transformation of community and society. The church must be 'kingdom' centered in its life, work and ministry.
8. Justice (economic, political and social) is a vital concern of the church. This defines the prophetic role of the church. The Church, they believe, cannot remain silent in the midst of injustices and the sinful exploitation of the poor. A 'kingdom' focus in ministry requires that the church work towards the establishment of justice and peace for all human beings. The Church is therefore called to resist all oppressive structures and

systems that dehumanises and rob people of their dignity and self-worth. What these churches propose is a prophetic *confrontation* of oppressive structures in society.⁵⁴ Many churches in South Africa have not seen justice as an important issue for the Church. In the days of apartheid, many churches chose to take an apolitical or neutral stance, thereby avoiding conflict with the apartheid regime. However, these churches involved in development work teach us that the Church cannot remain politically neutral, it must side with those whose policies and vision for the country favours the poor and needy.

- 9 All these churches embarked on community development programmes and projects to help bring about social transformation. These programmes were often not intended to help only Christians but all needy people in the community. This is an important aspect of development - to be inclusive of all people. If the focus is on humanisation then such an emphasis becomes necessary. A focus on humanisation will also lead to an interest of working with other faiths and organisations in addressing the needs of the poor.⁵⁵ However, these ministries of service to the community also helped to lead people to Christ sometimes resulting in such people joining the church.

A notable concern in the development programmes and projects of these churches is their theory and approach to development. It seems that some of these churches use models and processes that are in line with the modernisation approach to development even though the programmes are intended to encourage self reliance and human dignity (alternative development). The end result is that most of the projects tend to have a paternalistic view towards the poor. The majority of their projects are aimed at doing development for the poor instead of *with* them. The poor people are not involved in the process of finding solutions for their problems and determining their own future. This is not in keeping with a people-centred approach to development.

⁵⁴ See p. 193.

⁵⁵ See Section 5.2.4.6, p.197 f.

10. In order to best address the needs of the poor a *partnership* and networking of resources is necessary. The church cannot do it all by itself. Hence, it is required that the Church attempts to work with others in addressing the needs of the community. Some churches worked with the government and/or other churches to address the needs of the poor community. Some churches also established a partnership with businesses, other community organisations and even international donors and organisations. These churches also worked with other religious bodies in order to help develop the community. The central thought is that all resources must be used in helping the poor to overcome their poverty. It must be noted, however, that in the establishing of such partnerships these churches were concerned about not stifling or compromising their Christian witness and identity. However, working with other religious groups was a widely welcome idea as long as it was focused on addressing the needs of the poor.
11. Another very interesting fact about these Pastors is that they are very deeply spiritual people. Whenever we seem to think of people who are "social gospel" oriented we tend to think that matters of spirituality does not mean much to them. Such an assumption is absolutely wrong. I was truly amazed at the amount of time and effort that is devoted to prayer and the Word of God. Their ministry is essentially a faith ministry, they depend on God to provide for their (God's) mission on a daily basis. This, of course, requires much prayer and devotion.
12. Most of these churches, however, did not seem to have a clearly defined theology of development. By this I mean that they did not have a clearly worked out theological approach to development. In fact, that was not even necessary for them. All that was necessary for them is the fact that Jesus worked toward the upliftment of the poor and so it becomes necessary for the Church to do the same. In such a context then what we observe is a theology of praxis. The focus is on *doing* theology as one works toward the development, liberation and humanisation of the oppressed poor.

It is the last point that we turn our concentration to in the next chapter. The time has come for the Church to understand and embrace her theological mandate for development work. Unless this happens the Christian church will not fully embrace development as an integral task of the Church's ministry. Development will always be a secondary issue to the Church's ministry in the world. The church by her very nature and function is called to be a transformed society. It gradually becomes this as it continues to transform the society in which it is found.

Hence, having drawn together some of the theological themes prevalent in the churches doing development which we have researched, we shall now attempt to work towards a theology of development. This is the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we addressed the second aspect of this thesis that “undergirding the church’s involvement in development is a theology (of development) that the Christian church has not always fully understood or adequately embraced”. We showed this by examining two local churches and their development work within their communities.¹ In doing so we identified some key themes that contribute to a theology of development. In this chapter we will continue to address these themes as we discuss them further and in a wider context than the two case studies. It is not our aim, however, to attempt a systematic theology of development.² Our aim is two-fold: (1) to show that the Christian church has always had a *theological* mandate for development, which implies that development is no longer an option or a secondary aspect of the church’s mission. It is part and parcel to Christian ministry³, and (2) to show that this theology of development also *directs* the church to adopt a *people-centred* approach to development.

6.2 JESUS AND DEVELOPMENT

Central to the Christian involvement in development is the teachings and example of Jesus. Jesus

¹ We have noticed that even though these local churches were involved in development work they did not really understand their theological mandate for the same. Annalet van Schalkwyk draws the same conclusions: “In my practical experience, I have found that church members and leaders want to be practically involved in development projects, but do not have a sound developmental or theological basis for their involvement, which often creates problems.” ANNALET VAN SCHALKWYK, *The Church, Community Development and Liberation, Missionalia* 24:1, April, 1996, pp. 40-62.

² Our aim is also limited by the fact that we only attempt to deal with the theological themes that emerge out of our case studies. This means that there are probably other themes that can contribute to a theology of development.

³ “At the SACC/EFSA conference on Church and Development in October 1993, Canaan Banana stressed the need to formulate a clear theological basis for the church’s involvement in development (i.e., a theology of development). The lack of knowledge and of a sound basis regarding development may render the church vulnerable to manipulation by other societal and ideological forces concerned with development. The absence of a sound developmental basis may also inhibit the church’s creative response to the immensely complex problems of our society.” (ANNALET VAN SCHALKWYK, *Ibid.*, p.41.) The aim of this chapter is thus to establish a clear theological basis for the church’s involvement in development and to also show how such a theology directs the church’s involvement in development work.

consciously took sides with the poor and oppressed in his day and made their concerns his own.⁴ Jesus did not overlook human needs but responded to them with great compassion. He went so far as to link the reign of God with the establishment of a human community based on justice and equity – *shalom*. Our respondents in the case studies are aware of this.⁵ Hence, they feel compelled to do what Jesus did as they attempt to address the human needs within their communities. Their knowledge of Jesus is perceived in concrete terms related to their experience of him in their context of poverty and oppression. This *praxis* picture of Jesus also helps to shed light on the concept of development.

6.2.1. Who is Jesus?

The responses to this question in the Isipingo Farm and Olifantsvlei Farm communities provide the following answers:⁶

6.2.1.1 “Jesus is bread”

In the context of poverty and hunger Jesus is considered to be bread. The meaning of bread in this setting has more of a material than a spiritual focus. It refers to basic provisions that are essential for survival. Scripture points to the fact that God provides physical bread for the hungry: “When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there” (Ruth 1:6). In the wilderness God provided manna (bread) for the starving Israelites (Num. 11:8). In his own ministry on earth Jesus realised the need for the hungry to be fed and refused to send them away hungry: “As evening approached, the disciples came to Jesus and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’ Jesus replied, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’ ‘We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,’ they answered. ‘Bring them here

⁴ We have already shown this elsewhere in this study. However, special reference can be made to Chapters Two and Four.

⁵ See the previous chapter and Appendices 3A, B and C.

⁶ The following descriptions are singled out because they shed light on a theology of development.

to me,' he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matt. 14:15-21).

The disciples were not keen to make it their problem to feed the hungry and so they wanted Jesus to get rid of the 'problem' quickly. However, Jesus knew that the walk to the village was a long way ahead and that would only intensify their hunger. His *compassion* on the hungry compelled him to make their problem, his own. It is perhaps in this context that Jesus referred to himself as the bread of life: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). There are many biblical scholars, theologians and pastors who offer a spiritual meaning to this text. However, this text must be understood in its context where Jesus is talking about bread in a material sense: "I tell you the truth you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill" (John 6:26). Hence what Jesus is saying in John 6:35 is that he has come to make sure that the hungry are fed and the poor are cared for. He has come to address the needs of the poor and hungry as he pointed them to the Reign of God. This link between the coming 'kingdom' and the provision of material bread can be seen in the Lord's prayer: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread" (Matt.6:9-10).

But how does the coming of the 'kingdom' allow for the provision of bread? The issue here is one of justice. The poor in the Isipingo Farm and Olifantsvlei communities have no bread because of economic injustice. They have little or no income and are unable to feed their families. They send their children to school so that they will get something to eat and not starve to death. Their poverty is not as a result of laziness but of the evil policies of the previous apartheid government that placed economic wealth and power in the hands of the minority. Although the government has since changed, the situation of the poor in these communities remains the same, as they have pointed out.⁷ The coming of the 'kingdom' means the

⁷ See the previous chapter.

establishment of economic justice and, thus, bread for the hungry. Jesus worked towards this as he challenged oppressive structures in his day and attacked the rich for neglecting the poor.

The actions of Jesus thus have implications for the work of the church. The poor in these communities see Jesus as the 'bread of life' more in a physical and material sense rather than an exclusively spiritual way. Hence, when the church helps in the provision of that material bread, she points also to her Lord. The pastors in the communities observed are aware of this. They run programmes and projects through their churches which provides for the physical needs of the people. They believe that this is the example Jesus set. The poor people in these communities also believe that Jesus will help them because this is what he promised in the scriptures.

Whilst feeding the hungry is necessary at times, it has the danger of creating dependency. The poor are not empowered when they are caught up in such a circle of dependency on food parcels and handouts. They are only truly empowered when the root causes of poverty and hunger are addressed. This is the obligation for the Christian church as it follows the example of Jesus. Our examination of these churches, including the appendices, shows that whilst there is an awareness of this, most churches however tend to adopt a patronising approach to the poor. This is not a people-centred approach to development. The Church can only really be 'bread' to the poor when she works towards the establishment of God's 'kingdom', that is, economic, social and political justice. Christians who understand God's concern for the whole person and for the whole world should be especially conditioned to reach for a more human view of development, not one that fastens mainly on income or production. This means that development should be measured primarily by what happens to people on the bottom half, not the top half, of the economy.

6.2.1.2 *"Doctor Jesus"*

The description of Jesus as "Doctor" by the Olifantsvlei community is a reference to the fact that Jesus is seen as a healer. This picture is a very common and significant one in the community of the poor. When we probed, "Why is the fact that Jesus heals an important one to the community?" The common response was, "Because healing (that comes from Jesus) is free!" It is

clear from this that the poor in this community cannot afford to pay for medical services. As a result they turn to God for healing and restoration. Healing in this sense is related to the economic injustices that the poor face on a daily basis.

Jesus related his mission to the healing and restoration of both individuals and society. In his first sermon at Nazareth, Jesus indicated that 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me' and that 'He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor'. There he announced his ministry objectives as, in part, 'to proclaim...recovery of sight to the blind and to announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people. With this mission in mind Jesus set out to heal the sick, blind, lame, cripple, dumb and demon possessed.

Why did Jesus undertake to bring about healing? Nolan points out, "Anyone who thinks that Jesus' motive for performing miracles of healing was a desire to prove something, to prove that he was the Messiah or Son of God, has thoroughly misunderstood him. His one and only motive for healing people was compassion."⁸ His only desire was to liberate people from their suffering and their fatalistic resignation to suffering. Jesus recognised the *worth of a person* and with great compassion he reached out to heal and restore them: Jesus stopped on his busy way because a woman had touched him, recognising that she needed his healing. He stopped and saw a blind man and asked if he wanted healing. He was stopped by blind Bartimaeus who called out while begging on the street. Jesus ministered wherever his compassion led him to see people disabled and disadvantaged because of disease. The poor looked to Jesus for their healing because, like the poor in the communities we have studied, they could seldom afford to consult a doctor.

Health in the Old Testament is described by the Hebrew word *shalom*, usually translated 'peace', but by derivation meaning 'soundness' or 'well-being'. Health in the OT consists of wholeness and holiness. The NT presupposes the OT teaching about health and has more to say about healing. When Jesus speaks about health, he speaks of blessedness (Matt.5:3-11), life (Jn.10:10) and being whole (Jn.5:6). If we adopt the scriptural view of a person as a whole being, then

⁸ ALBERT NOLAN, *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel*, Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988, p. 49.

healing includes the whole person and all means of healing, whether medical or non-medical, physical or spiritual. Jesus did not come primarily to heal our bodies (cf. Jn. 5:1-9 where he healed only one out of a multitude), but to make people *whole*.

The focus on wholeness and well-being directed Jesus' attention not only on the individual but her community as well. What Jesus worked towards was the transformation and development of society. In order for a person to have wholeness her environment must also be changed. For example, much of the sicknesses in the Isipingo Farm and Olifantsvlei Farm Communities are the result of poverty and hunger. The people here cannot afford a nutritious meal. They do not have clean water and proper hygiene facilities, which often leads to an outbreak of diseases. Healing in this context also involves an attempt to transform the community and its living conditions. It means creating community as it addresses social, political and economic injustices. All through his ministry Jesus was set on creating *human community*. We see this in his healing ministry.

In the Gospel of Mark, what Jesus did was mostly healing (Mark 1:32-34). The mentally deranged were healed and could take their place as full human subjects in society again (Mark 1:29-31). Even those with leprosy, who were ostracised from society were healed and re-socialised (Mark 1:40-42). The lame could walk into the centre of societal life and activity again (Matt. 9:1-8). The blind received their sight to see which direction the world is taking under the impact of Jesus' work and tell others (Matt. 9:29-31). The deaf and dumb could hear and talk (Matt. 9:32-34). He purified the tax collectors and sinners by violating the purity law system (Luke 5:27-32) and rehabilitating them around a table of brotherhood (Mark 2: 5-16). Even the Sabbath had to make room for people and their needs - it should be for the person (Mark 2:23-28; Matt. 12:9-14) and not the person for it.

Jesus casts out demons; that is to say, he fights the spiritual forces that oppress people and lie behind individuals and structures of society, so that he may liberate people and society from their power. The all-embracing 'kingdom' of love is the basic guideline. Jesus manifests his love in response to the concrete situations of people. He restores the human person and brings him/her into the human community.

Hence, development is about healing. It is about helping people to become *more human* as they are integrated back into the human community. Kiernan states that ‘the church is particularly wanting in this area of health, always a major concern for the poor, in that it lacks an appreciation of the connection between religious observance and the physical and social well-being, which is presupposed among Africans.’⁹ He further establishes that the Zionists not only acknowledge this connection but service it. They have adapted Christianity to the conditions experienced by the majority of modern Africans: they are ‘poor but self-disciplined people who rely on divine help and the support of fellow-members to develop themselves physically, socially, economically and spiritually and who offer the same capacity for self-improvement to others.’¹⁰

The above pictures of God are specific and contextual in that they describe how people in a particular context of poverty see God. Most Christians who have engaged themselves with development work have done so advocating a “theology from below”.¹¹ Such a theology starts from the historical human context and it attempts to discover how God is already at work in that given context. It takes as its starting point the historical Jesus. It is not a fully developed, all-inclusive, systematic theology, as are the elaborated moral and dogmatic treatises that enjoy the blessing of our churches.¹² For example, the theological reflection of Latin American liberationists focuses on key biblical themes that have come out of their interaction with their own secular and ecclesial history.¹³ Leonardo Boff explains this well in what he describes as the “theology of the base”. He points out that “the point of departure of this theology is not a corpus of abstract dogma but the material - as well as spiritual - reality of the persons who belong to grassroots communities.”¹⁴ In extending this thought further, Boff asserts that “every theology is constructed with two locations in mind. The place that is given to faith and that which is given to

1988, p. 49.

⁹ JAMES KIERNAN, *African and Christian: From Opposition to Mutual Accommodation*, Op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.24.

¹¹ For example see GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, Op. Cit., pp. 189-202.

¹² Gutierrez in G. COOK, *The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American Basic Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspective*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985, p.110.

¹³ *Doing theology*, therefore, is not just an academic exercise, trying to deduce minor principles from major premises. It is an active commitment to live one’s faith, critically and questioningly, lovingly and hopefully. Latin American theologians have described this process as the pastoral cycle, in constant revolution from experience to analysis to reflection to action and on again. In doing theology, we put ourselves and our commitments on the line, seeking to find a way forward in our understanding of the world and our response to it.

¹⁴ L. BOFF, *Jesus Christ, Liberator: A Critical Christology of our Time*, Great Britain, 1980, p.22.

the social reality within which the faith is lived out.” He adds, “Theology always works within a certain type of analysis of social reality.”¹⁵ It is our view that the concept of theology from below should be taken a step further. We must now talk about a theology from *within* a particular context or community that describes that community’s reflection and experience of God. Doing theology and development means to engage in the cycle of experience, analysis, reflection and action in the context of our relationship to God, and to one another as poor and non-poor.¹⁶

A “theology from within” also has implications as to how the Christian church ought to view and pursue development. Development too must come from *within* the specific context. Far too often it is assumed that what development project or programme has worked in one context will naturally work in another. We have seen this in the modernisation approach to development.¹⁷ The countries in the West have assumed that their ideas will have the same results in the South. However, this has not proved entirely successful because the community, culture and contextual experiences of people in the South were significantly different from that of the West. Development from within (like theology from within) is a reflection and action by the local people on their own situation generating a desire to transform their own community. This is a people-centred approach to development that encourages the participation, involvement and empowerment of the local people in bringing about their own transformation.

The leaders in the church communities interviewed in the previous chapter make it abundantly clear that though their concern is for the poor yet they are involved with these communities because of Jesus. They take seriously what has been revealed about Jesus in the Scriptures. Hence their endeavour is to follow in his footsteps. For them, Jesus had a special ministry with the poor. He lived with them, cared for them, provided for them and preached the good news about the reign of God. Those who follow Christ are called to do the same. It can be seen by this that development work is no longer an option for the church, it is part and parcel to the church’s ministry in the world.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 9-10.

¹⁶ Whereas in theology the main emphasis tends to be on *reflection*, in development the chief focus tends to be on *action*. Both are combined in this definition of doing theology and development.

¹⁷ See the section on modernisation theory in Chapter Two in this study.

6.2.2 The Cross and the Resurrection as a basis for Christian development

Those involved in development work take the message of the cross and resurrection very seriously. It is the suffering and victory experienced at the cross that prompts Christians to be involved in the sufferings of the poor in this world.¹⁸ Our interviewees in the case studies make this abundantly clear. The realisation that the cross is of great historical and theological importance comes naturally to contemporary oppressed people as a result of their crosses. Takatso A. Mofokeng, however, states that this is not something new.¹⁹ The very first Christians realised this and concentrated their reflection on the cross and made significant theological, “God is love”, anthropological, “... God’s ultimate word for them is one of love rather than condemnation,” and christological, “Jesus of Nazareth is really the Son of God”, conclusions.²⁰

A theology of development is essentially a theology of the cross because it is the central point in which God really becomes one with human suffering and pain. The case studies in the previous chapter point us to the same reason as to why these Pastors and churches are involved in the sufferings and pain of the people in their communities. In Jesus Christ, we come to see the extent of God’s involvement in the redemption of history and the length to which God was willing to go to restore broken community. In the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, the sacrificial love of God was made manifest.²¹ The cross was a symbol of God’s great act of sacrificial self-giving – the willing offering of one’s life for another. Nürnberger thus establishes:

Christians should know that, in practical terms, the “cross” means suffering for the sake of others. They should know the difference between faith and idolatry. Fulfillment of life does not depend on the possession of ever more gadgets ... True riches consist in serving others in the power of Christ – a wealth which greed and longing will never attain. The

¹⁸ Nolan states “the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a powerful saving work because it gave the almighty power of God, the power of the Spirit, to the people.” ALBERT NOLAN, *God in South Africa*, Ibid., p.114.

¹⁹ TAKATSO A. MOFOKENG, *The Crucified Among The Crossbearers*, Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1983, p.92.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

²¹ This, however, does not mean that suffering must be sensationalised or romanticised. Suffering is not to become an end in itself, but rather a means to a greater end. We must be quick to point out that freedom is not achievable by passively accepting suffering, but by a struggle against suffering.

lure of selfishness must be transcended towards the needs of others.²²

The crucifixion and death of Jesus are part of his *identification* and solidarity with the underdog. D. Cloete and M. Buthelezi call the cross the ultimate test of Jesus' love for the oppressed.²³ For Buthelezi the cross is an event in which the love of God for the poor and the oppressed underwent the ultimate test of its durability. "God's love for 'man' (sic) proved to be so intense that it endured the test of ultimate violence (death by crucifixion). And therefore: "It is not the violence of the cross that saved us but the love of God that endured."²⁴ Relating this to the experiences of black people under apartheid, Mofokeng establishes: "This means that the cross hangs continually over the history of black people of our country. It hangs continually over black culture, black religion, socio-economic life and over our land. It hangs continually as the cross of liberation or redemptive suffering."²⁵ Mofokeng further points out how this view of the cross influenced Black Theology: "... Black Theology has become a *theologia crucis* that is done at the end of action, at sunrise. It has become a theology that reflects on the cross – dying - as an instrument of liberation. It has become a *theologia crucis* without abandoning or discarding the themes which occupied it earlier."²⁶ Black theological reflection thus emphasises the need for black people to become fully human (humanisation), that reflection presupposes an engagement in a praxis of liberation.²⁷ Involvement is a prerequisite for authentic theologisation. For instance, you do not theologically reflect on the cross of Jesus if and when you are not carrying the cross, i.e. when suffering and dying in which you are also a victim are the issues at that particular time.²⁸ It also symbolised the high cost exacted on those persons who would join God's work of transformation in the world. We see in this a firm basis for a theology of development. Our

²² KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution*, Op. cit., p.221.

²³ D. CLOETE, *Hemelse Solidariteit*, Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1981, p.91., and M. BUTHELEZI, Violence and the Cross in South Africa, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Op. Cit., p. 52.

²⁴ M. BUTHELEZI, Ibid.

²⁵ TAKATSO A. MOFOKENG, *The Crucified Among The Crossbearers*, Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1983, p.36.

²⁶ Ibid., p.36.

²⁷ Black theologians in South Africa are today re-considering the continued existence of Black Theology. Black Theology is essentially a political theology dealing with the oppression of black people. In the new South Africa, what does this mean? Does this theology have a future? My contention is that black theology can find a home in the theology of development. Why? Because (1) its focus is on the poor and oppressed, (2) its focus is on liberation and humanisation, and (3) it is also set on transforming society.

²⁸ TAKATSO A. MOFOKENG, Ibid., p.38.

interviewees in the previous chapter have a similar understanding as they engage development work with their respective communities.

However, more than this the resurrection of Christ is the pledge of the universal future. It is a *nova creatio*, the herald of the future. As such it is the antithesis or contradiction of a God-less and forsaken world; therefore, the as yet unrealised future of a promise is contradicted by given reality. The spirit of the risen Christ as promised transforms the negative contradictory aspects of the world. *The resurrection stands as a gift of a new, authentic life.*²⁹

Can humankind hope without the acceptance of the reality of suffering? Can Christ be risen without the suffering and death of the cross? In fact there is no true theology of hope which is not first of all a theology of the cross (and resurrection).³⁰ Suffering and hope are held in creative tension. Both are aspects of Christian eschatology; hope relates to the future and suffering to the present. Each is contained within the other.

For Moltmann, Christianity is, at root, faith in the crucified Jesus who is "... the foundation and measure of Christian theology as a whole."³¹ It is through an understanding of the passion of Christ that God is known. As Karl Barth puts it: "...the crucified Jesus is the 'image of the invisible God'".³² Moltmann expresses these sentiments also in the following words: "When the crucified Jesus is called the 'image of the invisible God', the meaning is that *this* is God, and God is like *this*."³³

For Moltmann, then, the crucified Jesus, far from being interpreted merely soteriologically, becomes a statement about himself. This has an implication which he expresses in these words:

²⁹ NÜRNBERGER, *Ibid.*, p. 220.

³⁰ Moltmann interprets Christian eschatology as an *eschatologia crucis*. See *Theology of Hope*, 5th Ed. Trans. by James W. Leitch, New York: Harper & Row, 1967, pp.159ff. God is truly "incarnated" in his suffering and death on the Cross. Without the Cross, Christianity loses its historical character.

³¹ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Future of Creation*, London: SCM Press, 1979, p.89.

³² K.BARTH, quoted in J. MOLTSMANN, *The Crucified God*, New York: Harper & Row, p.249.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.205.

“...but if the death of Jesus is supposed to be first a statement about God before it is an assurance of salvation addressed to men (sic), does this not mean ‘a revolution in our concept of God’?”³⁴

In Jesus’ suffering, humans can have solidarity in God. Moltmann expresses this truth in these words: “... suffering, and wounds are healed by wounds”.³⁵ As the poor in the communities we have examined focus on the sufferings of Christ they discover that they are not alone in their sufferings. God is no stranger to them. Because of the suffering of Jesus God understands human suffering and pain. The cross stands as a symbol of hope and eventual victory over their suffering, pain, exploitation and dehumanised life - a reminder of the life to come. Expressed eschatologically, “Taking part in Christ’s visible suffering in the world, the believer shares in Christ’s invisible glory”.³⁶ A God who suffers, a God of pathos, is affected by human suffering in history since he is interested in his creation. In contradistinction, a Godhead who is perfect needs nothing for pure causality cannot suffer. Without emotions God is *apatheia* (unchangeable).

Moltmann feels that the pathos of God, although only an aspect of His being, expresses the relationship of God to His people. This notion was inspired by Rabbi Abraham Heschel.³⁷

Moltmann writes of the pathos of God:

In his pathos the Almighty emerges from himself and enters into the destiny of the chosen people. In his passion he shifts his *esse* into an *inter-est* through his covenant with his people. Consequently he himself is affected by the actions and passion of his people ... He takes the people of his love seriously to the point of suffering under their action and of being capable of being hurt by their disobedience...³⁸

³⁴ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Future of Creation*, Ibid., p.62.

³⁵ Ibid., p.46.

³⁶ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Theology of Joy*, New York: Harper & Row, 1973, p.63.

³⁷ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Crucified God*, Op. cit., pp. 270-274. Heschel, drawing on the Hebrew prophets and the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people, correlates two concepts, the *pathos* of God and the *sympatheia* of man. Moltmann develops a Christology of this nature within a trinitarian understanding of God.

³⁸ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Future of Creation*, Ibid., p.69.

What are the implications for the human person of his/her 'new concept of God? "If God is *apathetic*, man (sic) becomes *homo apathetikos*; if God is divine pathos, man becomes *homo sympathetikos*."³⁹ It is evident that the human being's view of God affects the human being's view of the human person.

God enters *par excellence* into the relationship of pathos and sympatheia in Jesus Christ. This is principally for those unable to satisfy any conditions: sinners, the godless and the forsaken by God. Moltmann expresses the pathos of God thus:

The God-forsaken Son of God takes the eternal death of the forsaken and damned upon himself in order to become God of the forsaken and brother of the damned. Every person damned and forsaken by God can, in the crucified one, experience community with God. The incarnate God is present and accessible in *the humanity of every person* (italics added).⁴⁰

Such is the pathos of God that it is not merely vicarious suffering for us, God not only participates in the suffering of humanity in the world, but makes human suffering his own by taking death into his own life. Consequently the death of Jesus was a happening within the Godhead. It is more than "for us". It is also God "with us".

It is at this point that a "theology of development" begins to emerge. If God Himself, through the death of his Son, participates in human suffering- making it his own- then the believer is called to do the same. We cannot simply watch the suffering and injustice in the world and remain detached and silent. We need to make the suffering of the poor and needy our suffering too. Why? Because this is what Jesus did at the cross. This is how we interpret the views of our respondents in the communities of the poor examined in the previous chapter when they said that they were involved in these situations because of Jesus.

³⁹ J. MOLTSMANN, *The Experiment Hope*, London: SCM Press, 1974, p.76.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.79.

A theology of development then calls for a concrete involvement of the Church in the lives of the forsaken and forgotten *poor*. And just as Christ made our suffering to become his own so the church is challenged to do the same. The church is required to get practically involved in the development and transformation of society as it addresses the conditions of the poor, especially. This, of course, implies that the church's involvement in development is no longer a choice for the church. If the church is to be truly directed by its theology and not by ideology then the cross compels it to assume a preferential option for the poor.

Not only is the Christian church *called* into doing development but it is also *challenged* in how it chooses to approach development. It cannot subscribe to the theories of development that provide easy solutions to people's problems but fails to take the people themselves seriously. It cannot take a paternalistic approach to development as it has been accustomed to in the past. The challenge offered to the church is that it must take the approach of its Lord. This approach is one of *suffering love*.⁴¹ Such an approach implies a sacrificial suffering with the poor in their destiny for liberation and transformation. Such an approach means *identifying* with the needs of the poor and engaging compassionate action *with* them so that they may receive the authentic new life given to them in the risen Christ. The Christian presence of Christ in the world must be found in suffering love and this must be the basis by which we seek to transform the world. The way of suffering love transcends every barrier that prevents the unity of human community: race, class, creed, culture, politics and economics. It is the way that encourages us to see people as those created in the image of God.

⁴¹ Moltmann expresses the implications of suffering love as follows:

The suffering of God with the world, the suffering of God from the world, and the sufferings of God for the world are the highest form of creative love, which desires free fellowship with the world and free response in the world. JÜRGEN MOLTMANN, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, London: SCM Press, 1990, p.53.

6.3 GOD'S WORLD AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

6.3.1. The Creation mandate for development

In God's creation of the human person and the world many Christians, like those in our case studies, find inspiration for their commitment to the task of development.⁴² Here they discover the basis for a theological understanding of the relation of the human person to the world and the world to the human person.

The primary purpose of the whole creation is to make God known to humankind. It is made quite clear in the creation story of the Bible that the creation of the human person is the ultimate purpose of the whole creative process. God has called all things into being for the sake of human beings, and has ordered all things for our good and well-being.⁴³ As Gutierrez puts it, "Man (sic) is the crown and center of the work of creation and is called to continue it through labor".⁴⁴ This of course does not imply the greatness of the human person; we are intended rather to recognise in consequence the power and goodness of the eternal self-existent God. It is here that Calvin links creation and providence. He states:

as often as we describe God as Creator of heaven and earth we must remember that the government of all things which He had created is in His power and control, but that we are His children whom He has undertaken to preserve and bring up in His faith and protection, so that we may await all good from Him alone, and may entertain the sure hope that He will never suffer the things, which are so needful to our salvation to fail us; so that we may recognise all the benefits which we receive as coming from Him, and may

⁴² There are others who believe that God is bringing his creation to completion and human beings have nothing to do with it. Only God can bring it about. They, therefore, reject any notion of the church's involvement in development.

⁴³ There is a long established Christian tradition which considers the human being as the "crown of creation" and the rest of the world as created for human consumption or utilisation. Addressing the latter view Nürnberger states: "This is *scientifically* misleading because any entity is part of an intricate system of relationships on which it depends; the context is logically and temporally prior to the individual. It is *ethically* untenable because self-centredness in all its forms cannot be justified, even if it was the collective selfishness of humanity as a whole in relation to the rest of creation. It is *theologically* illegitimate because it is anthropocentric, rather than theocentric." See NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution*, Op.cit., p.170.

⁴⁴ GUTIERREZ, Op. cit. p.158.

confess them as such with hearty thanks; that thus, drawn by the great sweetness of His outpoured mercies, we may bestir ourselves to love Him and to worship Him with all our hearts.⁴⁵

The above point stresses the central place of the human person in the purpose of creation. We learn from this that development is about *people*. It is about the building up of a just human community. The Hebrew word *shalom* sums up for us a vision of God's purpose for creation. *Shalom* is a vision of the flourishing of a peaceful, equitable and just human community living in fellowship with God and in harmonious relationship with a thriving non-human creation.⁴⁶ Human well-being is to be measured by the extent to which the human community experiences *shalom*. The attempt of the churches in the case studies is to help bring its community into such an experience.

Creation is an expression of God's divine grace and faithful loving kindness. Creation is not controlled by the power of a blind fate, but by the word of God. Hence it discloses at the same time the grace of God which is made manifest in the gift of freedom and creativity given to the human person.⁴⁷ The human person is required to use this freedom and creativity not for selfish gain but to the glory of God and the service of others. The latter view certainly draws into question the theories and approaches to development (such as modernisation) which usually benefits the wealthy and powerful. All approaches to programmes and projects in development must favour the poor and marginalised. It is only when we do the latter can we truly create a peaceful, equitable and just human community. Within the range of specific powers and responsibilities humans have the authority to maintain, or to change the world.⁴⁸ We see in this a theological mandate for development.

⁴⁵ *Institue* 1, 14, 22.

⁴⁶ DAVID FIELD, The ethics of sustainable development, in LOUISE KRETZSCHMAR & LEN HULLEY (eds.), *Questions about Life and Morality: Christian Ethics in South Africa Today*, Pretoria: J L van Schaik Publishers, 1998, p.223.

⁴⁷ "Humans are supposed to be free and responsible. In fact they are not. Along with many other religions, the Christian faith is aware of human depravation and frailty. In other words, the designated agents of transformation are themselves in need of transformation. The demand to be what they ought to be *judges and condemns* them – rightly so." See NÜRNBERGER, *Ibid.*, p.216.

⁴⁸ The view on domination over creation is examined in 6.3.2

Creation is also an expression of God's goodness in that it is "good"- in fact, "very good", according to Genesis 1(NRSV). It is good, apart from human values (Ps.104) and independent of human interests. It is good not in the sense that evil is absent, which it clearly is not, but in the sense that the creation is an expression of the goodness of the Creator, that it is intensely valued by God in all its moral ambiguity, that it functions in accord with the divine design, that it is an appropriate habitat for humanity and all other beings in our interdependent relationships, and that it serves God's redemptive purposes for all created beings. Thus, God values biophysical reality and the needs of every form of life, human and otherwise. The planet has been created as a habitat to be shared by all. God's compassionate concern covers the whole and this concern is extended to human beings.

This affirmation of the biophysical is prominent also in the doctrines of the incarnation and the presence of the Spirit as in the incarnation "the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1: 14, NRSV). In the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, we have encountered the saving Christ. The incarnation confers dignity not only on humanity but on everything with which humanity is united in the biophysical *interdependence*. The incarnation opens the eye of faith to a new vision of the whole.

Moreover, in the church's experience of the Spirit, the world is filled with the glory of God (Isa.6:3; Ps. 19:1; Eph. 4:6). God is not only beyond but in the creation as the vivifying, reconciling, liberating, and sanctifying presence of the Spirit. Indeed, God is intimate with the creation, experiencing the joys and agonies of all creatures (Rom. 8:19-25). The whole creation is thereby endowed with value and dignity by association with the sacred. It is to be valued as God, who chose to be present within it, values it.

Thus, on the basis of our Christian interpretations of creation, incarnation, and the Spirit, biophysical realities have great moral significance. They are worthy of appropriate care and concern. Materiality is affirmed; material needs are not to be denied or transcended. Contempt for the material or biophysical is a false spirituality. There must be no indifference to hunger, poverty, and disease; human physical well-being matters! Nor should there be any neglect of

ecological integrity. While humans need to use other forms of life as resources, we also have responsibilities to use these resources fairly and frugally, to minimise harm to other living things, and to ensure sufficiency for all human communities, present and future. Therefore, wanton pollution, profligate consumption, human-induced extinctions, and excessive differences in economic well-being are sins- all because the God who is Creator, Redeemer, and Spirit, affiliates lovingly with all of creation.

But creation also carries a *challenge* calling upon human persons to complete it and make it serve the higher aims of the human spirit. The things of nature are, in themselves, not complete, but await the human person's work to give them their full significance in the pattern of the universe in submission to the plan of God. The first statement of the Apostle's Creed is that God is the Maker of heaven and earth. This is an affirmation of divine sovereignty, universal providence, creaturely dependence - and *human responsibility*. Nothing in creation is independent of God; nothing is equated with God. We learn from scripture "that God by the power of His Word and spirit created heaven and earth out of nothing" (Gen. 1). The statement that he brought the world into being out of nothing proclaims him to be the one who alone is eternal and self-existent.⁴⁹ In relation to him everything else stands on another plane. However, in the person of Jesus Christ is the final point of contact between God and the world. In the hypostatic union, Creator and creature become one and indivisible without any loss of their distinctive natures, without any confusion. There is an absolute difference but no distance between Creator and created.⁵⁰

In this regard, Moltmann sees God *in* creation rather than *over* creation. For him, God in creation is strongly pneumatological, for creation:

...exists in the Spirit, is modelled by the Son and is created by the Father. It is ...from God, through God, and in God...[Such a] trinitarian concept of creation binds together God's transcendence and his immanence.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Inst.* 1, 14, 3; I, 14,1.

⁵⁰ LAWRENCE OSBORN, *Guardians of Creation: Nature in theology and the Christian life*, USA: Apollos, 1993, pp. 114-115.

⁵¹ J. MOLTSMANN, *God in Creation*, New York: Harper & Row, 1980, pp.97f.

Moltmann sees God as immanent in his creation. This means that his Spirit is the very spirit of the universe, sustaining the initial creation out of his creative energy. Creation is thus not simply a single event occurring in the past but a continuing event right up to the advent of the eschaton. It is both a *creatio ex nihilo* and a *creatio continua*. Human beings are invited to share in this responsibility of bringing the world to its ultimate destiny as God intends it. In this we see a theological mandate for development. Our respondents in the case studies also express a similar view as they consider their involvement in seeking to develop their communities.

As the creator of all things, we must note that God created not only the visible but also the invisible. God is the sole source and providential benefactor of all being. God alone is the ultimate and universal proprietor: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and all those who live in it (Psalm 24:1, NRSV; cf. Ps. 50:12; 146:57). For Calvin, this implies that everything in the last resort must serve God.⁵² Thus, no part of the creation - whether other humans, other species, even the elements of soil and water is our property to use as we wish. They are to be treated in accord with the values and ground rules of God, the ultimate owner.⁵³ Hence, those who put their faith and trust in God have a more special responsibility to care for the earth and to be involved in the world. Why? Because this is God's world! And the way we choose to praise God is to take care of his world.⁵⁴

This then, understood correctly, has strong environmental implications. It means that we cannot continue to abuse the earth. We need a new awareness of the social responsibility of property and of the generational accountability of whatever we do. The good life is no good life if it has disastrous consequences for nature, for myself and for the generations to come. David Field

⁵² Here Calvin is attacking in particular the suggestion that there are two principles in the world: God and the devil. For him, such a creed undermines the creative glory and sovereignty of God-in fact the very divinity of God- and must therefore be rejected. See *Inst.* 1, 14, 3.

⁵³ But how are we to understand the consummation or fulfillment of the non-human creation? In response to this question Lawrence Osborn states: "The key, I believe, lies in the Creeds's insistence that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives life to creation: it is the fulfillment of his life-giving activity. This ought to rule out any suggestion that Christianity envisages a non-material, trans-historical eschaton: will the one who gives life to creation blot out all but a small portion of it at last? It is, of course, true that just such a view has dominated much of the history of Christian theology. A purely spiritual eschaton is the corollary of an intellectualistic understanding of spirit. When spirit is equated with mind, life may be seen solely in terms of (conscious) mental processes and the non-rational becomes the non-living, as in Cartesian thought". This is found in LAWRENCE OSBORN, *Ibid.*, p.124.

⁵⁴ See D. P. NILES, *Justice, Peace, And The Integrity Of Creation*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994.

reminds us of the need for human responsibility: "... this good creation belongs to God whose glory it displays. It can never be the private possession of finite human beings. The goodness of creation places the ethical demand on humanity to respect and even reverence creation."⁵⁵

This creation is suffering. There are thousands and thousands of examples: ozone depletion, climate change, land degradation, water pollution, deforestation, habitual destruction, species extinction, use and misuse of biotechnology. Everyday seems to bring news of some new environmental deterioration.⁵⁶

In the light of all this, we cannot simply relax and say, "there is always hope; God will save life". No, we have to live with the dialectic of the real threat and the real hope, with the knowledge that God wanted us to be co-creators. Liz Carmichael makes this point more strongly:

Our own activity meets God's activity in both individual and social spheres. Just as in our individual spiritual life our own efforts to become new people meet the transforming power of God's grace, so in our efforts to create new societies we discover that we are co-workers with God in realising God's vision for the world.⁵⁷

Hence the church has the responsibility to call on all people to engage in sustainable human development. All people must assume the responsibility to care for the earth. Consequently, no theology of development can omit this focus on creation. We have seen in the developmental programmes of some of the case studies in the previous chapter a focus on educating the poor about the need to care for the land. A theology of development takes seriously the environmental concern. Such a focus, however, influences the way we choose to do development. There needs to be an *integrated approach* to development. For it is in attaining a holistic perspective that the prospects for sustainability and sustainable development may be most easily realised.

⁵⁵ DAVID FIELD, *The Ethics of Sustainable Development*, Ibid., p. 222.

⁵⁶ D.G. HALLMAN, *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, pp.48ff.

⁵⁷ In KRETZSCHMAR & HULLEY (eds.), *Questions about life and morality*, Ibid., p.240.

Development cannot be seen in isolation from the relationships people have with one another and with the rest of the environment.⁵⁸ The extent of the harmony of relationships in society affects the nature of the development that can take place.

6.3.2 Image of God and Dominion

One of the chief concerns in a theology of development is the position of the human person. In fact, the human person is the main issue. It is out of her/his mind that the plans for development come. It is with her/his hands and intellect that they are implemented. It is the human person who benefits or suffers as a result from what happens in the development process. Hence it is important to have a realistic appreciation of what the human person is, what her/his powers and limitations are, and the part which she/he must play in the process.

The moral status of human beings is enhanced by the claim of the Christian church, based on Genesis 1:26-28 that humans are created in the image of God.⁵⁹ According to Calvin, in this regard the human person becomes the mirror of God's goodness. Humankind is called upon to reflect God's love, care and concern for the earth and other life forms. Calvin points out that "God having fashioned the universe as a magnificent theater of His glory, God placed man (sic) in it last of all as the privileged spectator. Even in himself, adorned by God with exceptional gifts, man was the most excellent example of God's works. And he was endowed besides with the capacity to turn his eyes outward and to admire the handiwork of God in others of His creatures"⁶⁰ To be created in the image of God provides a great honour - and a great responsibility. However, ideals of stewardship and dominion have often led to practices of dominion and devastation. Human beings have often regarded themselves as masters of the world, taming and domesticating it, doing as they please with its resources. This has

⁵⁸ ANDREW WARMBACK, The Earth is God's and all that is in it: Development from the perspective of the Environment, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 110, July 2001, pp. 77-88.

⁵⁹ The phrase "the image of God" has been subjected to a wide variety of interpretations throughout the history of Christian theology. A detailed discussion of these interpretations is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further details see DAVID CAIRNS, *The Image of God in Man*, London: Collins, 1973. DOUGLAS JOHN HALL, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, pp.88-112 and ANTHONY A. HOEKEMA, *Created in God's Image*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, pp. 33-65.

⁶⁰ *Inst.* 1.14.20-22 (1: 179-82).

characterised an anthropocentric outlook, which has been challenged by theologians.⁶¹ Andrew Warmback thus points out that “we need to emphasise our *responsibilities* more than our *rights*, and accept also the limits of our authority”(italics added).⁶²

The concept of the image of God provides a basis for Christian affirmations of the dignity of individuals, human rights, and democratic procedures. It suggests that human beings have a God-given dignity and worth that unite humanity in a universal covenant of rights and responsibilities - the family of God. The issue of dignity is central to a theology of development. We have seen in our case studies how frequently development was defined as dignity by the pastors interviewed. All humans are entitled to the essential conditions for expressing their human dignity and for participation in defining and shaping the common good. These rights include satisfaction of basic biophysical needs for example adequate nutrition, shelter, and, health care, environmental safety, full participation in political and economic life, and the assurance of fair treatment and equal protection before the law. These rights define our responsibilities in justice to one another, nationally, and because they are human rights, internationally.

The image of God also entails social and ecological responsibilities - and here dangerous distortions of the concept have arisen in modern cultures. The image is linked in Genesis 1:26-28 with dominion, which the divine images are called to exercise in relation to all other life-forms. This idea has raised the important question of whether dominion is a license for the destruction of nature or a mandate for its benevolent care and use. While dominion has been interpreted as a divine grant to prey on the rest of nature without restraints, we regard dominion to mean the entire *stewardship* of nature.

Osborn points out that we must be careful as to how we choose to understand the word ‘command’ in Genesis 1.⁶³ He warns that we must not allow this to mislead us into thinking that God’s creative activity is narrowly deterministic. On the contrary, in uttering those commands,

⁶¹ See for example GENE M. TUCKER, Rain on a Land where no one lives: the Hebrew Bible on the Environment, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116, no. 1, 1997, p.12.

⁶² ANDREW WARMBACK, The Earth is God’s and all that is in it: Development from the Perspective of the Environment, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 110, July 2001, pp.77-88.

⁶³ OSBORN, *Ibid.*, p.85.

'God gives permission for creation to be. The appearance of creation is a glad act of embrace of this permit.'⁶⁴ More positively, the creative words may be regarded as holding out a promise to creation, as offering created beings the gift of a future with God.

According to Calvin, we should view earthly enrichments in the light of our eternal destiny and the purposes of God. He also had this in mind when he spoke of stewardship: "We are the stewards of everything God has conferred on us by which we are able to help our neighbor, and are required to render account of our stewardship. Moreover, the only right stewardship is that which is tested by the rule of love"(3.7.5). The partially reconstituted human life of person - in Calvin's theology - must be a life in loving community.⁶⁵

In describing such a community Sallie McFague points out that: "We can no longer see ourselves as rulers over nature but must think of ourselves as gardeners, caretakers, mothers and fathers, stewards, trustees, lovers, priests, co-creators and friends of a world that while giving us life and sustenance also depends increasingly on us in order to continue both for itself and for us."⁶⁶

Harvey Sindima argues that "community must be based in a consciousness that all creatures are part of all others, that humans share a common destiny with nature."⁶⁷ Gabriel Setiloane who refers to community also echoes this "inclusive of all life (bios): animals, the habitat (the land), and flora, even the elements."⁶⁸ The earth should be viewed as one. This implies mutuality and interdependence. What is done to one part of creation affects the rest.

In pre-modern Christianity dominion was interpreted as a command against tyrannical abuse and for benevolent guardianship. Genesis 1, as we understand it, does not suggest domination or despotism. Approval for the exercise of unlimited power is absolutely foreign to Scripture. Humans are creatures subject to divine dominion. The land is God's, entrusted to humanity to

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ DONALD McKIM, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, Op. Cit., p.281.

⁶⁶ SALLIE McFAGUE, *Models of God*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979, p.13.

⁶⁷ HARVEY SINDIMA, Community of Life: Ecological Theology in African Perspective, In *Liberating life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology*, CHARLES BIRCH, WILLIAM EAKIN AND JAY B. McDANIEL (eds.), Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990, p.146.

⁶⁸ G. M. SETILOANE, Towards a Biocentric Theology and Ethic – via Africa, *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa* 9, no.1, May 1995, p. 60.

“till it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15) in accord with God’s rules - rules that even include a soil conservation mandate to let the land rest every seven years (Lev. 25:3-5; Ex.23:10-11). Earthly rulers are subject to the rules of God’s justice; they are the guardians of the good (Psalm 72). Westermann points out that such a ruler exists *for* his subjects interpreted in terms of the concept of kingship familiar to the ancient Israelites.⁶⁹ Thus, human oppression distorts the image of God and usurps divine sovereignty.

In contrast, humans act in the image of God when they are responsible representatives.⁷⁰ We are to “subdue” the earth only to the extent necessary to protect important human interests like nutrition, health, and creativity, and to do so in accord with the values of God’s dominion. To be in the image of God is a vocation or calling, based on the biological fact that humans alone have evolved the peculiar capacity to represent, in modest caring ways, God’s care for creation. We are called to be protectors of the biosphere and the frugal consumers of the world’s goods for the sake of just distribution among all humanity and other life-forms.

The New Testament’s understanding of the image of God enhances this social and ecological responsibility. Christ is the perfection of the image and the paradigm of dominion (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; John 1:14-18). Christians are to mirror the reconciling love of Christ (Eph. 5:1-2). Humanity is to reflect that love in relationships with all that God loves. This means to live out the image and the responsibility with nurturing and serving love.⁷¹ We are called to be faithful stewards, but only so long as stewardship is understood as just and benevolent service on behalf of the interests of both human and non-human kind. Herein lies a strong theological basis for the concept of development.

Such a theological view also has implications as to how we choose to do development. Many development programmes and projects are often decided by, initiated upon and implemented by the rich and powerful. Christian churches have either consciously or unconsciously followed development models that have contributed to the domination and oppression of people (we have

⁶⁹ C. WESTERMAN, *Creation*, London: SPCK, 1993, p. 52.

⁷⁰ See CLAUS WESTERMAN, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion, S.J., 1993

⁷¹ DOUGLAS JOHN HALL, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship*, *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8, 119-28, 184-87.

shown this as an example in the examination of the Moses Maren Mission in the previous chapter). The church has usually encouraged *dependence* rather than *self-reliance*. Its developmental work has usually been *for* the poor rather than *with* them. The problem with such an approach is that it does not liberate and empower people to take responsibility for their own development.

The issue here is one of power.⁷² Who controls, manipulates and directs the interest of development? Domination as we have already shown does not mean using power and authority for selfish gain and interest, it implies interdependence, responsibility and care for the other. Economic policies and development programmes then must reflect the latter. Hence development must not be done on the basis of power but by seeking empowering *partnerships* with those who are being developed.

The ministry of Jesus on earth shows how Jesus tried to encourage the people to help themselves. For example, in St. John's Gospel, 9:1-17, we read that a blind man asked Jesus to cure him. It is interesting to note that Jesus insisted that the blind man should help himself first. He was told to wash himself in the pool of Siloam. When he had done that then Jesus cured him. Another example can be seen in John 21:1-6. Some fisherman had worked all night but had caught nothing. They told their problem to Jesus. He told them to cast out their nets again and when they had done so the fisherman caught much fish. They had to make an effort to help themselves before Jesus worked a miracle. It can be noticed that in the Gospel when Jesus was asked a question he very often asked the people another question. In this way Jesus helped them to think and discover the answers to their questions.

Everyone has something to contribute to their own development. Jesus knew and accepted this in

⁷² For a more detailed discussion on the concept of power see: SARAH WHITE & ROMY TIONGCO, *Doing Theology and Development*, Op. cit., pp. 93-102. Also PAUL GERMOND, Theology, Development And Power: Religious Power and Development Practice, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, STEVE DE GRUCHY (edit.), July 2001, pp.21-31. Useful insights on the concept of power in apartheid South Africa can be found in ANTHONY O. BALCOMB, *Third Way Theology: Reconciliation, Revolution and Reform in the South African Church*, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 1993.

his ministry. Jesus taught a transforming and an alternative consciousness of power.⁷³ This is most clearly expressed in his prediction of his own death (Mark 8:31-38; 9: 30-37; 10:35-45). It can also be seen at the time of his temptations (Matt. 4:1-11). The temptations story show clearly how Jesus rejected the way of power. He sought a new kind of society which, rejecting the ruling values of wealth, prestige and power, would live by the sharing, humility, equality and mutual service of its members. We see in this an understanding of power that is utterly transformative. No more is the vision just of changing positions, of the mighty brought low and the poor raised up in their place. Instead the whole understanding of power is shaken to its foundations. To be empowered is to be the better able to serve. When power is used for service, rather domination, the dualism between the powerful and the powerless, the strong and the weak, is overcome. Hence the church's attempts at development must emphasise *service* instead of domination. The goal of *loving service* must permeate all the programmes, projects and processes adopted by the church as it seeks to transform society. Such an attempt describes a people-centred approach to development. Such an approach must direct the church's involvement in development.

6.4. JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

The poor in the communities studied are not poor by choice. They have been oppressed and exploited by the previous apartheid regime. Even though the political situation in South Africa has changed, they remain as victims of social and economic injustices. Aware of this the churches we looked at in the previous chapter were attempting to address these injustices, and in this sense they are involved in development work. These churches also show us that you cannot do development without addressing, at the same time, the issues of justice.

Justice is a very significant theological aspect of development.⁷⁴ The rights and responsibilities associated with the image of God are inextricably tied to the stress on justice in Scripture and tradition. Love is seeking the well-being of others in response to their needs and to the God who

⁷³ Power is the capacity to make a difference and this can be viewed positive, as well as negative. The exercise of power may empower others. This is how Jesus used power. Matthew 19-20 are two key chapters that set out some of Jesus' core teachings on power. These show a deep sense of paradox, a kind of topsy-turvy world, in which commonsense understandings are called into question, and conventional values are radically reversed.

⁷⁴ For some useful insights on this theme see YONG-BOCK KIM (Ed.), *Asian Forum on Justice and Development*, Singapore: WCC, 1984.

is love, and justice is an indispensable dimension of love and full respect for their rights. We render to others their due because of our loving respect for their God-given dignity and value. Hence distributive justice must be a critical focus of our global social and ecological responsibilities.

An investigation into the meaning of justice (*tsedeq* and *tsedaqah*) in the Old Testament shows that in the context of creation it has wider meaning. Justice for Israel, like all its neighbours in the Ancient Near East, manifests itself in the right and harmonious order of creation. In order to understand the peculiar nature of ancient Near Eastern conceptions of justice it is important to realise that creation does not primarily refer to the origin of the world at the beginning, but to a process by which cosmos, order, replaces chaos, not only in nature, but in society as well.⁷⁵ Creation therefore encompasses two realms, which for us are usually quite distinct, the realm of nature and the realm of society.

Justice for Israel then, means at least two things. First of all it refers to the just order in society, what today would be called the Rule of Law. This Rule of Law, according to Near Eastern conceptions, is not simply enacted through legislation. Law codes, if they want to reflect the just order of God, have to be grounded in creation itself. That means that the mere fact that a government has passed a law does not in itself guarantee the justness of that law. If that law is not in accordance with God's order of justice, that law will be legal but not right, not just. Secondly, where society is part of a universal order, our contrast between nature and society has no meaning. The terms *tsedeq* and *tsedaqah* therefore comprises not only justice in the narrow sense of the term, but also, in addition, nature and fertility as the following texts clearly demonstrate⁷⁶: Jer. 2:23; Ps. 85:12-14; 65:6-14; 72:3-7; Isa. 11:1-9; 32:15; 45:8; 48:18; 61:11.

The God portrayed in Scripture is the "lover of justice": "The King is mighty, he loves justice - you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right" (Ps. 99:4; cf. Ps. 33:5; 37:28; 11:7; Isa. 30:18; 61:8; Jer. 9:24). We see in his dealings with Israel how God seeks

⁷⁵ K.NÜRNBERGER, *Conflict and the Quest for Justice*, Pietermaritzburg: Encounter Publications, 1989, pp.77f.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

justice for his people. In sympathetic response to the groaning of Hebrew slaves (Ex. 2:23-24), the God “who executes justice for the oppressed” and “gives food to the hungry” (Ps. 146:7, NRSV) pushed Moses to become the liberator, smashed the shackles of Pharaoh, and led the people to a new homeland. God’s deliverance became the paradigm of justice for Israel and continues to be so for us.

The covenants between God and the liberated people were understood largely as God’s laws for right relationships. They established a moral responsibility on the part of the society and its members to deal fairly with participants in the covenant and to provide for the basic needs of all. They also served as an expression of loyalty to their Liberator and as a condition for harmony (shalom) in the community (Isa. 32:17). Injustice was a violation of the covenant and an act of faithlessness. In the light of the covenant, to know God is to show justice (Jer. 22:13-16; Micah 6 8). Indeed, justice in the prophetic tradition is a spiritual discipline, an act of worship, without which the value of other spiritual disciplines – prayer, fasting, sacrifice - are negated (Isa. 58:1-10; Amos 5:21-24; Hos. 6:6).

Faithfulness to covenant relationships demands a justice that recognises special obligations, “a preferential option” to widows, orphans, the poor, and aliens- in other words, the economically vulnerable and politically oppressed (Ex. 23: 6-9; Deut. 15: 2-11; 24:14-22; Jer. 22:16; Amos 2: 6-7; 5: 10-12).⁷⁷ This tradition of concern for the weak and poor was embodied in the idea of the Jubilee Year (Lev. 25). The Jubilee Year prevented unjust concentrations of power and poverty by requiring the return of property every fifty years. Similarly, the Year of Release (Deut. 15: 1-18) provided amnesty for debtors and liberation of indentured servants every seven years.

Justice is a very strong biblical theme that a Christian is called to take seriously. The reign of God, the central theme in Jesus’ preaching, should probably be understood as the fulfillment of

⁷⁷ God acted in the history of the people of Israel, liberating them from their bondage in Egypt and thus demonstrating compassion, faithfulness, and concern for justice and freedom. At Sinai God promises to take care of the people if they will keep the covenant with God. The following chapters (20-23) in the book of Exodus detail the code that is to characterise their lives: faithful worship of God alone, care for one another, creation of a just community, and a special concern for the vulnerable members of the community- widows and orphans, the poor and strangers. Thus the people of Israel are called into community, a just community that becomes the norm of their faithful response to God’s love for them.

the prophetic vision of justice and other dimensions of love (Matt. 5:3-12, 6:33; Luke 6:20-31). Jesus incarnates concern for the rights and needs of the poor, befriending and defending the dispossessed and the outcasts. For instance, the Magnificat of Mary (Luke 1:52-53) and Jesus' reading from Isaiah (61:1-2) in the temple (Luke 4:16-21) stress social and economic justice; they seem to be attempts of the early Church to define the exemplary ministry of Jesus and, the ministry of the Church itself as the pursuit of justice. The suffering servant, with whom the Church traditionally has identified Jesus, is the one who proclaims justice to the nations (Isa. 42:1-4; Matt. 12:18).

Justice then is at the ethical core of the biblical message. Hence it is a moral imperative for Christians, especially in our time.⁷⁸ Human beings, as moral agents and agents of social change, possess the power to make positive moral choices and engage in liberative action aimed at the transformation of society in accordance with the moral norm of justice.⁷⁹ Justice demands that we focus especially on meeting the needs of the poor and oppressed both domestically and globally. Justice must also be extended to nonhuman life.⁸⁰ Thus economic policies and systems must also be evaluated socially and ecologically on the basis of their benefits and harms to the well-being of all in our interdependent relationships.⁸¹ Economic policies that allow the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer must not to be tolerated. Economic policies that enable some to get more benefits and others to be deprived must be *confronted* and resisted with all perseverance. The struggle for social justice is the transformation of existing structures of state, economic order and society, so that the poor and oppressed may become full participants in the total life of society. Humankind must thus be actively, radically involved in the creation of the just society. In harmony with divine purpose, the human being (especially the Christian) must be radically involved in the struggle for justice, and willing to suffer courageously for the redemption of the human community (this is clearly seen in the case studies examined in the

⁷⁸ YONG-BOCK KIM, *Justice And Development*, Singapore: WCC, 1984, pp. 158ff.

⁷⁹ The theological debate among Christians at this point is sharp indeed. Some call for pacifism, some for violent revolution, and both sides appeal to the Christ of the New Testament to support their position.

⁸⁰ Though concepts of justice are not applied explicitly to nonhuman life in the biblical texts, there are sound reasons why this extension should occur in our time- notably, to represent the all-encompassing compassion of God.

⁸¹ See B. W. ANDERSON, Creation and Noachic Covenant, in *Cry of the Environment*, PHILIP N. JORANSON and KEN BUTIGAN (eds.), Santa Fe: Bear & Co., 1984, pp.50-51.

See also *Economic Justice for All*, Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986, XV.

previous chapter). This is clearly expressed in a famous sentence from the document produced by an international Synod of Bishops in 1971, *Justice in the World*:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation. Working for justice is not peripheral or optional, but rather central and essential for a life lived in relationship with God. Faith affects every aspect of the believer's life, including the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions. Our faith is not just a weekend obligation, a mystery to be celebrated around the altar on Sunday. It is a pervasive reality to be practiced in homes, offices, factories, schools, and businesses across our land.⁸²

To sum up, justice is a process whereby injustice is overcome, exploitation lifted, oppression removed, rights restored, and livelihood assured. The demand for justice permeates all social action, social relationships and social structures. Whatever we do in the struggle for justice, our concrete action should be seen as directed toward social transformation. In other words, there needs to be a vision of an *alternative society*. Hence the Christian church is called to do more than its mere engagement with welfare projects that usually bears the marks of a paternalistic ethic towards the poor. The church must identify with the poor in their struggle for justice by seeking to transform existing structures of state, economic order and society, so that the poor and oppressed may become full participants in the total life of society. No genuine development is achieved unless the people take the active and primary role in transforming their own situations with what they believe is a transformed society because it serves the humanising of life.⁸³ This is a people-centred approach to development.⁸⁴

⁸² In J. M. THOMPSON, *Justice & Peace: A Christian Primer*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997, p.188.

⁸³ Whereas in Montreaux economic growth, with social justice and self-reliance were seen as the main vehicles for development, now the politicisation of the process has changed, both the order and the meaning. Priority is for democratisation in the interests of the people's participation in decision-making. Self-reliance does not mean the people's capacity for self-help toward their own livelihood but points to an alternative society which must await the accomplishment of democratisation and the role of the people's movement.

⁸⁴ The idea of a "people-centred" approach to development is a contemporary one and cannot as such be found in Biblical times. However, it can be seen as an extrapolation of certain emphases already found in the Bible and in the

Such an approach to development requires that all the projects and programmes implemented by the church should also have a *people orientation*.⁸⁵ These programmes can be undertaken as entry points to a continuing process of transformation, as they enhance the bargaining power of the people, build the solidarity of a community, and increase the awareness of exploitation through conscientisation and education.

The Christian church has not always taken these considerations seriously in its development initiatives. There are many factors that prevent the process happening. Sometimes projects finish up benefitting the rich because of failure to analyse the power factors in the community. Sometimes they become dominated by the functional purpose, and lose the perspective of transformation that the particular function is meant to serve.⁸⁶ Sometimes they support or supplement government plans and projects, instead of organising the people for power to bargain with Government. Sometimes they instill competitive profit-seeking that obstructs the building of any new community. People must be full participants in planning and implementing according to their needs, so that they are always aware that the struggle is theirs.

Harvey states that if the perspectives of evaluation are transformational and sensitive to the humanising process, the basic questions will be:⁸⁷

- How does the project release people, build sharing community, and enhance the solidarity of the people?
- Does the project give power to the people to share their own future as a community, and uncover their potentialities and strengths within cultural realities?
- Does the project enhance their understanding of their situation and the power factors operating in it, and their will to do something to change it?
- How does the project benefit the poor? (my addition to the above questions)

Christian tradition. We have shown this in the relationship of Jesus to *people* (See especially sections 6.2 to 6.5 in this chapter.)

⁸⁵ Whilst the churches in our case studies have a vision of an alternate society they, however, fall short of directing a 'people orientated' approach to their development projects and programmes. In this sense the issue of justice becomes compromised.

⁸⁶ See HARVEY PERKINS, *Roots for Vision*, Op. cit., p.90.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Development cannot be done without justice. As the church engages development all its projects, programmes and processes must also themselves embrace justice. The kind of development thrust that is required is one, which focuses on a vision of a just society and a new humanity.⁸⁸ As it releases the oppressed and restores the marginalised, it must work to transform all the prevailing exploitative and dominating structures into a just society. Every development action must be headed for the liberation of society's victims through *participating* in the struggle for a new society and a new humanity, where exploiter and exploited will cease to be. Hence the church's theology directs a very necessary involvement of the Christian in development.

6.5 HUMAN DIGNITY

Responding to the question, What is development? The majority of pastors interviewed stated that it is about 'human dignity'.⁸⁹ Giving people their God-given dignity, thus helping and enabling them to become more human.⁹⁰ The poor in the communities examined have been (and still are) denied their rights to food, jobs, education, health, water, electricity, and other such basic rights. We have seen how the churches in these communities are addressing these needs and are thus helping the poor to become more human. We note in this, however, that human

⁸⁸ A statement which shows most clearly the pressure in a programme to spell out a vision can be seen in a church programmes in Pakistan:

"In the present capitalistic set-up, the distribution of wealth is so woefully unjustly divided that a small minority holds the reigns of productive control, whereas the majority has nothing but raw labour to barter for necessities of life. The capitalistic system of society promotes economic exploitation, injustice and individual self-centredness. In order to project equitable distribution in the economic field, and justice in the social field, the present system has to be substituted by a new order with social equality and distributive justice. Every effort must be harnessed to bring awareness toward the exposure of injustice in the present system. But above all, it must project a vision which the people can work for, live for, and die for." In HARVEY PERKINS, *Roots and Vision*, Ibid., p.94.

⁸⁹ Some years ago SL Parmar, a scholar from India who participated in WCC discussions, also related development to human dignity:

If poverty and injustice are the main facts of economic life, the potentiality of the poor must be the main instrument for overcoming them. This would be possible if the people in the developing countries discover a sense of dignity and identity within their socio-economic limitations. To assume that only when we have more, when we are nearer the rich nations, we will have dignity and identity, is a new kind of enslavement to imitative values and structures, an enslavement that dehumanises. (SL. PARMAR, Cyclostyled paper, being comments to section 4 of the WCC Conference, Nairobi, 1975.)

⁹⁰ Throughout history humans have oppressed one another. On the basis of some accident- such as race, colour, ethnicity, birth, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, caste, or religion- people's humanity itself has been violated. Oppression and discrimination can take many forms- slavery, imprisonment, torture, violence, impoverishment, exclusion, humiliation- but at the heart is dehumanisation. The full humanity of the victim is denied, and, paradoxically, the oppressor becomes less human in the denial.

dignity is closely tied with human rights.⁹¹ We shall now attempt to explore this theologically, but we must first ask: "What are human rights?"

Attempts to define human rights have led to great complexities.⁹² Human rights make strong claims. Right is not a word to be thrown around loosely. If a person has a right, then the community and other persons have a duty to respect and fulfill that right. Because a right confers an obligation on community, it is not surprising that various societies have contested the foundation, meaning, and scope of human rights.⁹³ Even the Christian church is grouped among the latter. Leonardo Boff illustrates this fact: "Practically everything the Western world regards as a basic human right today was once rejected by the official church. Freedom of conscience was called an "erroneous opinion," and even "madness". Freedom of opinion and expression was qualified as a 'most pestilential error'."⁹⁴

C. Villa-Vicencio states that some Christians have rejected talk of the theology of human rights for very different reasons. Seeing it as a humanistic development, bordering on personal arrogance and pride, they argue that the image of God has been destroyed within humanity, leaving humankind irremediably sinful, deserving of no recognition and worthy of no intrinsic rights.⁹⁵ He also maintains that this is a theological argument that has on occasions been used politically to defend the most flagrant violations of human rights.⁹⁶ To explain this Villa-Vicencio cites the example of J.M. Potgieter, professor of private law at the University of South Africa, who employs the argument as a basis for rejecting all proposals for a Bill of Rights in South Africa intended to defend and promote the rights of all citizens. Insisting that the image of

⁹¹ Dignity is a category of *being*. Along the same line, dignity means respect for all other persons, no matter what their capacities or conditions of life. In this sense, addressing the violation of human dignity can be seen as the hard core of strategies to protect human rights.

⁹² For a discussion on this see CHARLES VILLA-VICENCIO, *A Theology Of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human Rights*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 117f.

⁹³ For example Christians have often argued that, being sinners, humans have lost all rights and depend solely on grace. Nürnberger states that this "is a theological misunderstanding. Rights are necessary precisely because of human depravity. Having been denied the privilege of the "presence of the Lord", Cain, the primeval murderer, received a mark so that he would not be killed himself." See NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution*, Op. cit, p.178.

⁹⁴ LEONARDO BOFF, *When Theology Listens To The Poor*, San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988, p.50.

⁹⁵ C. VILLA-VICENCIO, *ibid.*, p.121.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

God can only be restored through conversion to Christ, Potgieter regards the masses as having no essential rights.⁹⁷ It is not surprising that this argument was used by right-wing Christians for attacking church leaders and theologians who have supported the call for a Bill of Rights in South Africa.

Human rights are rights that a person has simply because one is *human*. Such rights are held equally by all humans, and they are inalienable. Human rights regard individual persons as unique beings. Perhaps this is illustrated in the parable of the lost sheep:

Jesus said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt. 12: 11-12).

This parable stresses that it is acceptable to do good (help those in need) on the Sabbath. Furthermore, it establishes the significance and value of the one (human person) to God. This person has rights. There are several ways of describing human rights. Perhaps a better way is to differentiate rights into three sectors or spheres of the human person essential to the preservation of human dignity: basic needs, freedom, and relationship.⁹⁸ Human beings, for example, need food and shelter for bodily existence. Similarly, the freedom to associate with others, to participate in political decisions, and to express religious beliefs are fundamental to human dignity. Every person depends on community- the relationships into which we are born and the ones we form and choose - for his or her development and flourishing.⁹⁹ To each of these

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 122.

⁹⁸ DAVID HOLLENBACH, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition*, New York: Paulist Press, 1979, p. 95.

⁹⁹ Rights can also be differentiated according to the way they are mediated by society and social institutions. Here too there are three dimensions: First there are *personal rights* which protect fundamental characteristics of the person as such, e.g.: life, bodiliness, work, sexuality, family. Second there are *social rights* which specify the positive obligations of society toward all its members for providing conditions that enable human beings to grow and thrive, e.g. health care, political participation, adequate working conditions, education, and assembly. Finally, there are *instrumental rights* which promote participation in forming the institutions that shape and structure human life, such as the government, the economy, the health care and educational systems, and the law. See D. HOLLENBACH, Ibid., pp. 89-100.

essential areas of human existence -needs, freedom, and relationship- corresponds a set of human rights that defend human dignity within that sector.

What does the Bible have to say about human rights? Explicit Christian thinking about and articulation of the idea of human rights is of more recent origin. But the issue itself is longstanding. From a biblical viewpoint, human rights are founded not in the fundamental freedom of humanity, but in the revealed truths that: 1. men and women are the fruit of the everlasting word of creation (Gn. 1:26-27), as confirmed in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:24; Col.1:15), and as the bearers of God's image have a dignity and worth guaranteed by their creator (Gen. 9:6; Jas.3:); 2. They are called and enabled by that same creative word to be stewards of God's creation (Gn.1:28; 9:1; Ps. 8:6-9); and 3. For that reason they have a momentum in themselves and a responsibility towards themselves and others before God (Mt. 22:35-40). This responsibility stands alongside and, if necessary, may need to be exercised even over against the communities of which they are part (e.g. Acts 4:19; 5:29).

Whilst accepting the above biblical motivation for the Christian concern with human rights, Boff poses a more fundamental theological reason with which we agree. He states that God's concern for the poor and oppressed must prompt a Christian concern for the human rights and dignity of the masses (poor): "When you start with the poor, you realise how urgent it is to prioritise human rights; the right to life and the means thereto - physical integrity, health, housing, employment, social security, education - must come first."¹⁰⁰ In the Bible the basic assertion is, "He who oppresses the poor blasphemes his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy glorifies him" (Prov.14:31). God takes up the cause of the poor (see Psalm 146:6-9).

God is not only the supreme guarantor of a just order, God's principal activity is the defense of the rights of the powerless, the persecuted, the poor. Hence God does not side with the mighty who have the law at their disposition and utilise it to their own advantage instead God sides with those violated in their dignity and their justice (see Ps.72:12-13). God is therefore the guarantor of the fundamental rights of the poor (Ex. 22:20-22).

¹⁰⁰ BOFF, *Ibid.*, p55.

Jesus refers to this tradition (Luke 4: 17-30), as handed down in Isaiah 61:3, in his presentation of his messianic program in the synagogue at Nazareth. The Beatitudes confirm Jesus' awareness that he is the liberator of the poor, of those who weep, of those who suffer hunger, injustice, or persecution (Luke 6:20-23, 5:31-32). God-in-the-flesh identifies with the poor and calls us to do the same: "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40).

It can be seen from the above that as the church attempts to restore dignity to the poor and oppressed, it does so by asserting their human rights. This can be clearly seen in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. Black Theology started by affirming the dignity, worth and rights of black people. Mofokeng states that "when God creates black people as his people, black people in turn become the people of God. They accept the challenge of affirming their dignity and working with God in his struggle for liberation of oppressed humankind, and actively start to do so".¹⁰¹ This view influences Black Christology which grapples simultaneously with the question of the creation of black humanity and the black acting subject that responds by affirming its given humanity and actualising its subjectivity: becoming a self-creating and a self-liberating subject. This subject now receives his or her dignity as he or she works toward the struggle and upholding of the rights of others. The concept of the image of God and God's concern for the poor provide a basis for Christian affirmations of the dignity of individuals, human rights, and democratic procedures. It suggests that human beings have a God-given dignity and worth that unite humanity in a universal covenant of rights and responsibilities. The issue of dignity is central to a theology of development.

The way we choose to do development must be careful to restore and maintain the dignity of the poor. The kind of conditions we seek to create for living should be such that it is an appropriate environment in which people who possess an inherent dignity can live. In creating these conditions we ought to take people's own concerns into account, we must empower them to be subjects of their own destiny. Many social upliftment and development programmes are imposed upon people, which is to completely disregard their dignity. The people themselves must be empowered to determine where it is they want to go: "Development is the process of people

¹⁰¹ T. MOFOKENG, *Op. cit.*, p.35.

taking charge of their lives ... [T]o develop is to gain an increasing power to define, to analyse and to solve one's own problems."¹⁰² Dignity, then, is encouraged through participation. Hulley makes the same point in the following comment:¹⁰³

[U]nless ...[that group] is enabled to exercise its humanity by participating in its own development, the development programme is likely to fail or at least be retarded. Any growth that may take place but which bypasses these people is defective because it does not meet the requirements of social justice. Conversely any growth which is imposed on them, to which they are not prepared to say 'Amen', is likewise defective. The ordinary people are both the object and the measure of development.

The modernisation approach to development, for example, does not take the need for human dignity into serious consideration. The focus is on economic growth. However, growth as development is not subsumed by economic growth. The issue is "*do the people grow*"? That involves a major challenge to the export-led growth theory, and a call for a new balance between exports and self-reliant domestic growth by enhanced production for domestic consumption. To do that will require two demands – one is for more *equitable* economic development; the other is for the *participation* of the people in their pursuit of their livelihood, in ownership of domestic resources, and in participation in decision-making at all levels of national life.

As the church gets involved in development it must be mindful of the theories it adopts which directs its developmental programmes and projects. It must always ensure that in its attempts to bring about social transformation that the processes and programmes it employs are in themselves *transformative* and that they uphold human dignity by being people-centred. The ideal relationship that we should have with others in development work is one of respect, reverence and presence. In other words, we should respect them as people because they are the handiworks of God. We must reverence them because they are God's people, and finally we

¹⁰² G. KENT, Community-based development planning, in *Third World Planning Review* 3:3, 1981, p.313.

¹⁰³ LD. HULLEY, *On being human: A consideration of human criteria for judging development and development aid*, Utrecht: Stigting Pressa Trajectina, 1980, p. 192.

should be present to them, i.e., really listening and trying to be available to them when they request our help.

6.6 SIN AND JUDGEMENT

The human person was created in the 'image of God'. In this sense the human person is required to be the mirror of God's goodness.¹⁰⁴ The scripture provides a two-fold knowledge of the human person. God has made Godself known to us as Creator and Redeemer; correspondingly we are to know what the human person was like when first created, and what his/her condition is since the fall. The existence of the human person as created by God is defined by thankfulness, the correlate of God's goodness, the existence of the human person in sin is defined by pride or self-love, the antithesis of goodness. The human person in sin has surrendered his/her humanity to a life of thanklessness. The way we express thankfulness is to contemplate in all creatures, as in mirrors, those immense riches of God's wisdom, justice, goodness, and power.

Sin is a declaration of autonomy from God, a rebellion from the sovereign source of our being. It reflects the human person's desire to be God's equal; and in seeking his/her own glory, the human person lost the capacity to reflect the glory of God. Sin makes the self and its values the center of existence, in defiance of God's care for all creatures and in disregard of their interests.¹⁰⁵ Sin tempts us to value things over people, measuring our worth by the *quantity* of goods we acquire and consume, rather than by the *quality* of our relationships with God and with others. Sin is also injustice, the self-centered inclination to defy God's covenant of justice by grasping more than our due and depriving others of their due. Mofokeng describes this kind of justice: "Man (sic) is continuing to sin against God, by determining and deciding what justice and righteousness are (Gen. 3, 5). And in practice his concept of justice is nothing but creation and promotion of inequalities and contradictions wherein his justice works for his exclusive favour."¹⁰⁶ Our case studies in the previous chapter, describes the eventual results of sin: social,

¹⁰⁴ BRIAN A. GERRISH, *The Mirror of God's Goodness: A Key Metaphor in Calvin's View of Man*, in *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, Op. Cit., pp.107-119.

¹⁰⁵ See HAROLD KNIGHT, *The Theology of Calvin*, Grand Rapids: Baker House Books, 1980, pp.80-88.

¹⁰⁶ T. MOFOKENG, *Ibid.*, p. 179.

economic and political domination and exploitation created and justified institutionally, and in South Africa, by the apartheid government. In referring to apartheid South Africa Nolan states that human beings must take responsibility for the monster they had created.¹⁰⁷

Sin often takes the form of exaggerating human powers to solve problems. Overconfidence in technology, for example, leads decision-makers to take dangerous risks that do not make sufficient allowance for the virtual inevitability of human error and sin. Technological optimists may not be able to find substitutes for depleted resources soon enough, or increase agricultural productivity fast enough to feed a rapidly growing population. We are neither wise enough nor good enough to prevent the systems that we create from malfunctioning or abusing human beings or nature. A realistic awareness of the weaknesses in human character and the limits to human ingenuity can encourage us to avoid high-risk gambles, to exercise cautious care, and to find solutions that fit the human condition. Far too much contemporary economic and technological development assumes human ability to predict and control the non-human creation.¹⁰⁸ It has also failed to take account of human greed and pride.

Hence, development strategies, programmes and projects must take serious recognition of human finitude and sinfulness. Human finitude and sinfulness require *humility* before God, our fellow humans and the grandeur of creation. Such humility ought to incite a constant evaluation of development efforts in the light of the poor. It must ask whether the poor are the real benefactors and whether the development processes are enabling them to become more human. If these are not happening then humility is needed to admit to failure and to reconsider options in the favour of a people-centred approach to development.

Sin is manifested not only in individuals, but in social institutions and cultural patterns (we have seen this in the case studies). These structural injustices are culturally acceptable ways of conducting daily living that give some individuals and groups of people advantage over others. Because they are pervasive and generally invisible, they compel our participation. They benefit

¹⁰⁷ ALBERT NOLAN, *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel*, Cape Town: Clyson Printers (Pty) Ltd, 1989, p. 89.

¹⁰⁸ DAVID FIELD, *A Theological ethic for sustainable development*, Op. cit, p.227.

some and harm many others. Goba identifies apartheid as a *social sin*¹⁰⁹ that embodied the negative human values of the white community in South Africa.¹¹⁰ It represented an act of collaboration in the maintenance of a violent and repressive political system especially by white Christians. Whether or not we deserve blame as individuals and churches for these social sins depends in part on whether we defend or resist, tolerate or reject, them.

Social sin is encountered in global economic disparities and ecological degradation. It is corporate in a global or institutional sense and far more than individual in character. Indeed, every economic system embodies social sins, albeit in different degrees. Pope John Paul II points to two interrelated actions and attitudes that seem to be the root structures of sin in the contemporary world – “the all-consuming desire for profit” and “the thirst for power.”¹¹¹ They give rise to “certain forms of idolatry: of money, ideology, class and technology.”¹¹² Christian responsibility, then, must include social and political action aimed at transforming the root causes of evil and suffering.

Sin, fortunately, is not the only characteristic of human beings. There is also a strong potential for good, empowered by the grace of God who intervenes in human affairs to renew, reconcile, and enlighten the peoples of all nations. Indeed, no social life would be possible without some substantial level of human goodness. This other side of the ambiguous character of human beings provides some realistic possibilities for social transformation. The human potential for good is

¹⁰⁹ Gregory Baum points out that social sin resides in a group, a community of people. He then proceeds to discuss various levels in which this functions:

The first level of social sin is made up of injustices and dehumanising trends built into the various institutions – social, political, economic, religious, and others which embody people’s collective life. A second level of social sin is made up of the cultural and religious symbols, operative in the imagination and fostered by society, that legitimate and reinforce, the unjust institutions and thus intensify the harm done to a growing number of people. On a third level, social sin refers to the false consciousness created by these institutions and ideologies through which people involve themselves collectively in distinctive action as if they were doing the right thing. See GREGORY BAUM, *Religion and Alienation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1975, p. 201.

¹¹⁰ BONGANJALO GOBA, *An Agenda for Black Theology*, Johannesburg: Skotaville Pub., p. 75.

¹¹¹ Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis)*, 1987, in O’BRIEN and SHANNON (eds.), *Catholic Social Thought*, p.37.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

also the basis for our hope that the powers of sin can be constrained.¹¹³ The pastors and church leaders in the case studies are examples of the latter fact.

According to Jesus' parable of the Last Judgement - or, perhaps no less accurately, to the parable of Economic Justice and Judgement (Matt. 25:31-46) - social and economic relationships count eternally. To neglect the deprived and powerless is to reject Christ, who encounters us in the hundreds of millions of the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned, and alienated people of today's world, all of whom make a rightful claim for just and compassionate responses. Their needs can be fully met only by justice achieved through political and economic institutions. The church must be a participant in this struggle for justice.

In describing such church participation, Pope John Paul II recommends the virtue of *solidarity* as the antidote to structures of sin.¹¹⁴ He sees solidarity as the moral virtue and social attitude that corresponds to the reality of global interdependence. Such solidarity is diametrically opposed to the desire for profit or a thirst for power. It calls for a readiness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the other and to serve the neighbour, as opposed to a willingness to exploit or oppress the other for one's own advantage. Because of the unity and interdependence of humanity, the virtue of solidarity is a commitment to recognise the equality of persons and peoples, to share the goods of creation with all, and to work with others as partners on behalf of development, justice, and peace.¹¹⁵

If God's covenant of justice is the right ordering of relationships, sin is the wrong ordering of relationships. The moral ordering of the planet requires that biological limits be respected, that just rules of relationships be observed, and that our interdependence in culture and with nature be honoured. Sin is disdainful of these limits and disruptive of these rules. Christians can discern the dynamics of sin by searching constantly for the causal relationship between environmental abuse

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, no.38. See JACQUES DELCOURT, The New Status of Solidarity in the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, in S. M. NATALE (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Social Values*, held at St. Edmond's College, University of Cambridge, Vol. 1, New Rochelle, NY: Iona College, 1991, pp. 189-196.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

and ecological collapse, and between injustices and social disorders. The religious consciousness confronts the judgement and wrath of God on those occasions when the consequences of our commissions and omissions signal a serious disordering of relationships between persons, in society, in relation to nature.

The often costly consequences of the sins that God's judgements confront remind us of our *interdependence*. God's judgements are meant to be corrective, to promote right relationships, and to shape human behaviour toward wise and just ends. The grace of natural and social judgement is to save us from our sins, deliver us from evil, and restore the covenant of justice. The only appropriate response to these judgements is repentance.

Cutting across the optimistic appraisal of the human person's possibilities is the experience of sin. The world lies under the sign of sin. For the Christian, Christ liberates the human person from sin so that she/he may live again as a child of the promise. No theology of development, accordingly, can afford to ignore a person's enduring potential to destroy as well as to create. How then can she/he be entrusted with the ideal of progress and development?

The Christian answer to this pessimistic question is the power of the resurrection. The Christ who wrought our reconciliation also endows us with the power of his Spirit. Hence, the human person's work need no longer be the fruit of egoism and his/her progress so deformed. Referring to the same thought in the context of black suffering, Mofokeng speaks of the creation of the new "human person" – as a result of the resurrection.¹¹⁶ This new human person, according to Mofokeng, continues to discover his/her humanity as he/she identifies with the poor. This then is an obligatory task for the Christian church.

¹¹⁶ MOFOKENG, *Ibid.*, pp. 227-263.

6.7 THE "KINGDOM OF GOD"

The Christian pastors and workers in the Isipingo Farm and Olifantsvlei communities see their development work within these communities as an attempt to bring in the "kingdom of God".¹¹⁷ They are working towards the comprehensive well-being of all human beings within the context of the comprehensive wellbeing of their social and natural environments. Their concern with the establishment of God's reign in these communities provides an essential theological theme for a theology of development. It tells us the following about the 'kingdom of God' :

6.7.1 The 'Kingdom' is not merely spiritual

The Christian workers in the communities studied did not seem to view the "kingdom of God" in exclusively spiritual terms. For them the "kingdom" is related to the concrete experiences of the people in their daily life.¹¹⁸ And in this sense it has everything to do with their economic, political and social circumstances, especially has they relate the 'kingdom' to God's particular concern for the poor and the oppressed.

Christians who view the 'kingdom' in exclusively spiritual terms, avoiding dedicated service to the transformation of society, usually do so on two traditions. The first is the apocalyptic notion of a divine future that relegates the Lordship of Christ to an imagined end of times.¹¹⁹ The other is the Hellenistic notion that the Lordship of Christ is applicable only to the spiritual, not to the

¹¹⁷ See the previous chapter. It is God who brings in the "Kingdom". It is his gift, however, we can allow God to use us as his 'instruments' to advance his "kingdom".

¹¹⁸ Liberation theologians have also done the same. See footnote 122 in this Chapter.

¹¹⁹ An important consequence of the application of terminology of the coming aeon in connection with the "kingdom of God" is that far-fetched speculations about the end of the world can be done away with; "instead of this, the human person is made ready for the demand which the creator makes, to set up his rule, a demand before which every religious curiosity founders." A further important consequence is that the "kingdom of God" can in no way be thought of as a function of human activity. On the contrary; human activity is wholly excluded. The "kingdom of God" appears by itself, like the fruit from the ground (Mark 4:28); the human person cannot do a thing to bring it about. Her sole responsibility is to adopt an attitude towards it and to receive it, in the same way as a child does not live through its own activity, but through the gift of life which it has received (Mark 10:15). Moreover, the birth of apocalyptic bears witness to the fact that human history is powerless to bring about salvation. Only a transcendent intervention of God into history can bring salvation about.

physical and social realms.¹²⁰ The statement attributed to Jesus, “My kingdom is not of this world!” (John 18:36) has been misquoted endless times to legitimate this dual evasion. The “kingdom of God” will come when God wills it to come, it is said, and humans can do nothing about the evil world as long as it lasts. The only valid response to the depravity of the world is to accept one’s personal Saviour, gain peace with God, and love each other. The peace of the rest of creation is not part of the Christian agenda. Nürnberger states that ‘this kind of piety is nothing but an (probably unconscious) attempt to rationalise oneself out of responsibility.’¹²¹ It is true that humans cannot create the ideal conditions envisioned by the concept of the “kingdom of God” but that does not mean that they should not have a vision that provides direction and inspiration for a world according to God’s plan.

Hence there are many today that view the “kingdom of God” in socio-economic and political terms.¹²² For example, Sobrino points out that Liberation Theology, as far as it is concerned with liberation, adopts and makes use of the “Kingdom of God” as ‘its most all-embracing theological concept’.¹²³ The work of Jesus is seen in a similar way, as Mofokeng puts it: “The key concept in the praxis of Jesus is the impending advent of the ‘kingdom of God’ with its universality and totality of scope.”¹²⁴ In our view the “Kingdom of God” does not signify something that is purely spiritual or outside this world. It is the totality of this material world, spiritual and human that is now introduced into God’s order. This is how the Christian workers in the communities studied see the “Kingdom of God”, and with whom we agree.

¹²⁰ This view expresses that though the human person awaits, receives, inherits, possess, enjoys the ‘kingdom’; enters the ‘kingdom’ - but she/he does not bring it about. The one who brings it about is God. The ‘kingdom’ is an objective dimension. In other words, it is founded on God’s activity. Human activity is certainly a condition of the acceptance or loss of the ‘kingdom’. Yet the outcome is not founded upon this activity. It does not originate from human action. It originates solely and directly from the will and action of God. The ‘kingdom’ is a result of the creative activity of God. God does not bring the ‘kingdom’ about by developing what is already inherent in the world. Essential to the hope for the ‘kingdom’ is that it expects the renewal of the world in a form arising not through immanent development but due to a creative demonstration of the power of God.

¹²¹ KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty & Pollution: Managing the Approaching Crisis*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999, p. 161.

¹²² After Rauschenbusch and his ‘Social Gospel’ movement, European Political Theology (Moltmann, Metz) and Latin American Liberation Theology (Gutierrez and many others) have linked the concept of the “Kingdom of God” and even the concept of personal holiness with socio-political involvement. See also BOSCH 1992:376f for the new “turn to the world”.

¹²³ S. J. SOBRINO, *Christology at the Crossroads*, New York: Orbis Books, 1978, p.42.

¹²⁴ MOFOKENG, *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

Even Jesus did not have an exclusively spiritual view of the 'kingdom'.¹²⁵ Such can be seen in some of the ancient texts: "I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the 'kingdom of God'" (Mark 14:25). At other times he promises to whoever abandons all for love of the 'kingdom' a hundredfold in houses and lands (Mark 10:30). To the disciples he says: "And now I confer a 'kingdom' on you; ...you will eat and drink at my table in my 'kingdom and you will sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30; cf. Matt. 19:28). The breakthrough of this new order is imminent: "I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place" (Mark 13:30). On one occasion he makes it still more concrete and affirms: "I tell you solemnly, there is some standing here who will not taste death before they see the 'kingdom of God' come with power" (Mark 9:1). Christ is aware of the fact that the end of the world has begun with him. He himself already belongs to the 'kingdom'.

6.7.2 The "Kingdom of God" is not a territory but a New Order

The Christian development workers in the case studies see the 'kingdom of God' as a new ordering of right relationships with God and people. Such a relationship must also lead to just, peaceful and harmonious relationships among all people. When this happens it is a sign that the 'kingdom' is amongst us. They are, therefore, actively working toward the wellbeing of all people in their communities.

In one of the most visionary passages of the entire Bible, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ 'handing over the kingdom to the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and authority and power (1Cor. 15:24). In this text the 'kingdom' is understood as life free from the reign of all those forces which enslave humanity. These 'powers' are understood as enemies, which act against human life here and now- the final enemy being death (1Cor.15:26). Elsewhere, Paul defines the power as all those aspects of life which enslave: sin (Rom.7:14), the law (Rom. 7:10), vanity and

¹²⁵ But Jesus also asserted, "My kingdom does not belong to this world" (John 18:36). What did he mean by this? Boff explains: "The meaning here is that the Reign of God is not of the structure of this world of sin, but of the structure of God in the objective sense: it is God who will intervene (via the mediations he himself will select), and who will heal in its root the whole of reality, raising this world from old to new." LEONARDO BOFF, *When Theology Listens To The Poor*, San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, , 1988, p.128.

corruption (Rom. 8:19-21, this present evil age (Gal.1:4), weak and miserable principles (Gal.4:9), spiritual forces of evil (Eph.6:12). By contrast, the 'kingdom' is life where human beings are no longer subjected to destructive forces.

In another sense, the 'kingdom' is the sphere of life where God's Spirit is in control, where justice, peace and joy are experienced completely and permanently (Rom.14:17). It is the messianic banquet, where everyone will enjoy equally and to the full God's noble gifts, experiencing how another's enjoyment of being human enhances one's own. It is the place where God will be 'all in all' (1Cor 15:28): that is, recognised universally as the source of all life, justice, love, wisdom and truth, the only redeemer, the Lord of history and the righteous and merciful.

The "kingdom of God" then is not a territory but a new order. It cannot be narrowed down to any particular aspect. It embraces all: the world, the human person, and society; the totality of reality is to be transformed by God.¹²⁶ Hence the phrase of Jesus: "The kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:21). Boff states that the latter expression, according to most recent exegesis, signifies: "The new order introduced by God is at your disposition. Do not ask when it may be established in the future. Don't run here and there as if the "kingdom of God" were attached to some place."¹²⁷

To view the "Kingdom of God" as a new order characterised by justice, peace and righteousness has two serious implications.¹²⁸ Firstly, it implies a revolution in our thinking and acting. It calls for a conversion that does not only consist of pious exercises, but rather in a new mode of existing before God and in the light of the tidings announced by Jesus. It is to choose to be where God is and to do what God does, i.e. among the poor and oppressed in society (see Matt. 13:4-46, 10:37; Luke 17:33; Mark 9:43). It is a willingness to say *no* to the established order, which impoverishes and dehumanises human beings in the interest of self and self-acquisitiveness.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ LEONARDO BOFF, *Jesus Christ, Liberator*, Op. cit., p57.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p.55.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

This demand goes so far that Jesus threatens us with the following harsh words: "If you do not change your way of thinking and acting, you will all perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). The endeavour of Jesus is to [re]-create the new human person, free and liberated by Christ, invited to participate in the new order. Mofokeng speaks in a similar way when he talks about the liberation and creation of the new black human being.¹³⁰

Secondly, the "kingdom of God" implies a revolution of the human world. It calls for a radical change to the human condition of poverty and exploitation. It requires that Christians *participate in God's plan* to bring about a transformation of the world and wellbeing of all human beings.¹³¹ This involves opposing oppressive structures in the attempt to bring about justice and *shalom*. Thus action towards the realisation of the "kingdom of God" can now be seen as legitimate human response to the divine initiative. However, it must be stated that the coming of the "Kingdom of God" is the sole initiative of God. But God can, and does, involve people in the service of his 'Kingdom'. It thus places an imperative on the church to be involved in development.¹³² Such an involvement must take human beings seriously because the "kingdom of God" is for *people*.

6.7.3 The "Kingdom of God" is here

The 'kingdom' is a present reality. Jesus sends the disciples, and tells them: 'All authority, all power, the reign in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (Mt.28:18-20). As a consequence the disciples go into all regions of the world knowing *a priori* that those regions are already being shaped by the 'kingdom' that has been given to Christ and that is surely coming. According to the Bible the 'kingdom' does not belong exclusively to the future. It is a present reality that, though not yet fully revealed, does nevertheless show definite signs of being underway. When

¹³⁰ MOFOKENG, Ibid.

¹³¹ I do not here have in mind the idea of 'works-righteousness'. The 'Kingdom' is not something we bring in, it is a *gift* of God. God, however, may choose to use us in the service of his 'Kingdom' but we cannot claim to realize the "Kingdom of God". I therefore consciously mention that we "*participate in God's plan*" (not ours) to bring in his 'Kingdom'. Refer again to footnote 119 and 120 in this chapter.

¹³² Development here must not be seen as the 'modernist' paradigm of growth and progress - a goal to which we must strive. Instead, it must be seen as the church's participation in the transformation of the world in the light of God's gift of the 'Kingdom'.

John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus and asked whether he were the Messiah or whether they should look for another, Jesus answered with these remarkable words: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me" (Matt. 11:4-6). Jesus was thereby indicating that the 'kingdom' both has already come and is yet coming. It is both present and future.

When Jesus sends out his disciples on a missionary journey, he gives them powers related to the 'kingdom': they are to proclaim the good news to the poor, heal the sick, cast out demons. And when they come back and report to him, Jesus interprets what they experienced as a radical defeat of the forces of evil: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10: 18). He tells the Pharisees: "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' behold the 'kingdom of God' is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21).

In Christ, the 'kingdom' has dawned. In this, a new radical dimension has been added to the 'kingdom' perspective of the Old Testament. A particular person in a concrete historical period becomes the embodiment of God's final purpose for all creation. Through the coming of the Holy Spirit the Christian community is empowered to remember him, to experience his presence here and now, and to look forward to his coming in judgement and glory. In order to proclaim this faith, they are ready to confront the Jewish authorities and to challenge the imperial pretensions of Caesar.¹³³ The Lordship of Christ is at the very centre of the New Testament vision of the 'kingdom of God'. In him, "once for all" (Heb. 9:26) the foundation stone of the 'kingdom' has been laid. Thus in the name of Christ the pastors in the case studies are attempting to confront the evils and injustices experienced by the poor in their communities. And in this regard they see the presence of the 'kingdom' in their midst when the poor are uplifted.

The 'kingdom' is present in the struggles of humanity. But in so far as humanity suffers still with Christ, and Christ still suffers with us, its resurrection and transformation remain a future hope

¹³³ JOHN STOTT, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1975, pp.22-25.

D. BOSCH, *Witness to the World*, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980, pp. 66-70.

and the 'kingdom' is still to come.¹³⁴ It is as Philpott puts it quoting the Amawoti community: "The kin-dom of God will be perfect at the end of the age. Right now, it is struggling because of sin, and the church, and the government. It's not perfect, but it is here."¹³⁵ In the meantime human beings are called to *participate* in the coming of God's 'kingdom', which is not just a vision for the future but a profound critique of our best efforts. Herein lies a basis for a theology of development.

6.7.4 The 'Kingdom' to Come

We have referred earlier to the new fact introduced by Jesus - the time is fulfilled, the 'kingdom' is at hand. We have also considered the dynamic historical character of the struggle of the 'kingdom'. Now we further realise that the early Christians were full of the expectation of the 'kingdom' to come, the second coming, the judgement, and transformation of all reality. The prevailing spiritual and theological atmosphere of the early Christian communities was one of praying and waiting for the return of Jesus. The synoptic gospels provide evidence that this expectation was shared by Jesus himself.¹³⁶ At the same time that he was acting in the power of the 'kingdom' - being himself the 'kingdom' - he called the people to prepare themselves for the radical novelty of its final coming. He used the apocalyptic image of the Son of Man, poor and powerless, coming with divine power to judge all people and to inaugurate the 'kingdom'. Most of the parables of the 'kingdom' point to this future coming. The mystery of the 'kingdom' is its inconspicuousness; small like mustard seed (Matt. 13: 31) but it is pregnant with explosive potential.

The prayer of Jesus maintains the dialectic between the 'kingdom' we pray for and the will of God that is to be implemented on earth. God's 'kingdom' is future, it will come, we are called to enter it; but the 'kingdom' is also at work. Barth points this out as he relates the present and

K. BARTH, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. IV, No. 3, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962, pp. 860-862.

¹³⁴ JOHN MUDDIMAN, The Resurrection of Jesus as the Coming of the Kingdom - the Basis of Hope for the Transformation of the World, in ROBIN BARBOUR (ed.), *The Kingdom of God and Human Society*, Edinburgh, Great Britain: T & T Clark, 1993, p.209.

¹³⁵ GRAHAM PHILPOTT, *Jesus is tricky and God is undemocratic: The Kin-dom of God in Amawoti*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993, p.76.

¹³⁶ LEONARDO BOFF, *Jesus Christ, Liberator*, Ibid., p.78.

active work of the living Lord to his ascension.¹³⁷ Jesus is present and active in the existence and by the activity of the community that is created, moved and enlightened by his Holy Spirit. And as a result of his presence and activity in and through the community in the world, the alteration that has objectively happened in the world is visible and tangible in it but only in the light of the story of Jesus Christ and not independently, that is, in the light of the altered community and altered world. Jesus who is present and active in the community of his followers is also the One who is coming in his new being, his new Easter form, as the Crucified and Risen.¹³⁸ This promise has an unmistakable effect on the community's consciousness, activities and forms of life or structures. The community understands itself as an eschatological community whose being is ahead of it in the coming being of Christ who is coming. Its activities and its structures of societal life, which it has helped to realise, are provisional and transient in view of the coming Lord of the world. The present, its activities and achievements of the transformation of the world, are not denied nor ignored as to their importance for the world here and now. Neither are they overvalued. The present project, and achievements of the committed community do have and do retain an undeniable importance for the overall movement and global project of the community towards the definitive. It is not only a necessary basis for the movement and its activities for the creation of new structures of life and new ways of living. But, it is mainly a basis of an impatient movement to the future. In other words, hope of the coming of Jesus Christ, of the definitive manifestation of alteration of the world creates impatience and mobility. This is evident in the phrases employed by Barth to describe the effect of the promise of the coming of Jesus Christ: they 'reach forward' and 'they stretch out to' the new.¹³⁹

The coming Jesus Christ deepens and enriches present Christian praxis immeasurably, creates and sustains an unshakeable confidence in the future liberation, and makes radical engagement for liberation, by itself almost always a painful burden, a joyful event (this is clearly expressed in the views of the pastors in our case studies). He is therefore the object of faith and the content of hope. But faith is not a kind of make-believe utopianism. Faith is protest against apparent

¹³⁷ See ERICH GRASSER, On Understanding the Kingdom of God, in BRUCE CHILTON (ed.), *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, p.57.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

inevitabilities.¹⁴⁰ According to Gutierrez, "faith in the future is not restricted to hope for individual salvation, but is a faith in a future which we fashion with our own hands."¹⁴¹

The historical world is thus not a cage from which the person needs to escape in order to experience redemption, but is itself the arena for God's redemptive activity. The world of cause and effect can thus be transformed by human activity as the course of history is reincorporated into the purposes of God. This means that, for Liberation Theologians, the vision of the future determines activity in the present: eschatology is realised by human beings acting in accord with divine ends. Fixing our eyes on the future, Gutierrez writes, determines our 'real action in the present and becomes our effective commitment.'¹⁴²

We have attempted to show in this section that the Biblical theme on the Reign of God provides a basis for the Christian church to be involved in development. Hence development can no longer be an option or of secondary importance for the church. It must be an integral part of the church's ministry. God is busy bringing in this new 'kingdom' and he does so by using people as his instruments. Hence the Christian cannot simply sit down and wait for God to do his thing. We are called to actively share in this given responsibility. We are to share in the continuation of creation as we work towards a just and sustainable future, and a world characterised by peace, righteousness and justice. This is indeed 'kingdom' business.

6.8 THE CHURCH'S MISSION AND HOPE

The church is a community in response to the *Missio Dei*, bearing witness to God's activity in the world by its communication of the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, *proclamation and praxis*. It therefore, has no liberty to invent its own agenda but to fulfill the mission of its Lord:

Mission is the fundamental reality of our Christian life. We are Christians because we have been called by God to work with him in the fulfillment of his purposes for *humanity*

¹⁴⁰ NÜRNBERGER, *Prosperity, Poverty and Pollution*, Op. cit., p.159.

¹⁴¹ GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, Op.cit., p.175.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 237.

as a whole. Our life in this world is life in mission, Life has a purpose only to the extent that it has a missionary dimension (*italics added*).¹⁴³

The churches in our case studies certainly view 'life in this world as life in mission.' They are determined to fulfill the purposes of God as they seek to address the living conditions of the poor in their communities. They attempt to address all human needs with the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ.

The world and its history are under the rule and authority of God. The church must remember this, especially when tempted to "flee the world" by withdrawing into itself. It declares from within the world the new thing that God had done in world history, a history of which the church is an integral part. This new thing is the reconciliation of the world that has taken place in Jesus Christ, and as such has altered the whole human situation and the course of world history.

God takes the human person seriously and the church is a community of human persons. This is what Barth means when he speaks about the *Menschlichkeit Gottes*; in Christ it is once for all established that God does not exist without human persons: God is who he is, not in *abstracto* nor without relationship, but as God for the world.¹⁴⁴ If this be true, it follows that the church which exists for God must also exist for all human persons and the world. Just as Jesus Christ expresses his own true divinity in his true humanity, so the church expresses its Christological character in being for men and women. Mission then is clearly not an option, not something added to the being of the church which the church does as one of its many tasks. On the contrary, mission is part of the event-character of the church. The community exists by and with its task. This implies that the Christian church is called upon to embrace a view of mission that is not limited to the mere 'saving of souls'. Nürnberger states that "Christians, who are concerned about nothing but their personal salvation, have no contribution to make to the church as a living community, to society at large, to the natural world as a whole"¹⁴⁵ The integral character of salvation demands that the scope of the church's mission be more comprehensive than has

¹⁴³ Quoted in, JA. KIRK, *What is Mission: Theological Explorations*, Great Britain: Page Bros., 1999, p.31.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ NÜRNBERGER, Ibid., p.195.

traditionally been the case. Salvation is as coherent, broad, and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence. Mission therefore means being involved in the ongoing dialogue between God who offers his salvation, and the world, which – enmeshed in all kinds of evil – craves that salvation. Mission means being sent to proclaim in deed and word that Christ died and rose for the life of the world, that he lives to transform human lives (Rom. 8:2) and to overcome death.¹⁴⁶ Salvation, then, is explicitly tied to developing this world. The Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah and Amos, consistently tied “knowing God” and receiving his “kindness” to the doing of the works of justice. In this respect the New Testament only confirms the Old: the *humanisation* of life has religious value in itself, for the command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless (Matt.25:31) is categorical and unconditional.

Humanisation is part and parcel to the mission of the Christian church. The assumptions of our Western world view lead us to separate the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality. In making this separation, we assume that redemption affects the spiritual instead of the physical realm. This view of redemption leads us to assume that development work does not make a direct spiritual contribution to Christian mission. Doug Hammond, expressing his own struggle with this separation of the spiritual and physical states: “Some people suggest that our mission is one spiritual and one social, but that is a lie. I don’t think that those are separate. Our social ministry is spiritual.”¹⁴⁷ Schalk Pienaar says the same thing but adds: “The discussion [evangelism and social concern] will always go on, but what concerns me is that I think very few church groups and organisations will actually be able to close that gap. When one looks at Mother Teresa... I mean, there is our mission, which is not a valid dichotomy between social concern or evangelism, simply saying, here I am in the name of Christ, to wipe your brow. That for me is mission, not to change you or to read you but to serve you.”¹⁴⁸

The church intentionally bears witness to the meaning and relevance of the ‘kingdom’, while not itself being identical with that ‘kingdom’. It is called to the risky task of being the living interpretation of that ‘kingdom’; otherwise, the ‘kingdom’ can be a little more than a slogan,

¹⁴⁶ DAVID BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, Op. cit., p.400.

¹⁴⁷ This quote is repeated (see chapter Five) to give added emphasis to the views expressed by our interviewees.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

ideology or human programme of betterment. Hoekendijk puts it starkly: "The nature of the church can be sufficiently defined by its *function*, i.e. its participation in Christ's apostolic ministry."¹⁴⁹

The church's ministry is to be a manifestation of the love of Christ. Hence, all of God's people are called to be agents of this love. We do this as we witness on behalf of social and ecological justice and call out for repentance and reconciliation. We do this as we become the voice for (and with) the poor, a challenge to the rich. God accompanies the poor on the journey to justice and calls the church to accompany the poor - working and sharing with them, learning from them, and testifying with them to the presence and power of God (Isa. 40:27-29). This is what the pastors interviewed in the previous chapter attempted to do among the poor. They attempted to be the loving and caring presence of Christ.

The church is also called to be the agent of hope in a dark and fallen world. It has this responsibility because of the good news it shares in the resurrected Lord Jesus. The Resurrection of Christ is a constant reminder that pessimism is premature! Hope is always warranted. This is the mission of the church: to bring hope especially to the poor and oppressed in the world. This is what we see the churches in the case studies doing.

Hope is a very central theme in development and the Church has much to offer in this regard. During the course of this research I noticed a church building in one of the poor communities that stood out tall, expensive and elegant. I asked people from within the community what they thought about this expensive and beautiful building in the middle of an informal settlement. They replied that it stood for them as a symbol of hope. They knew where they were in their present life circumstances but this building held out the promise of where they ought to be. Hope tells us that we are on the journey of becoming what God wants us to be. As the Church attempts to transform individuals and society it also establishes the hope of a 'New Jerusalem'. Hence the church in its very mission is called to be involved in transforming the world. As it seeks to

¹⁴⁹ BOSCH, *Ibid.*, p.35.

embrace and engage development it must adopt a people-centred approach to development. In doing so it attempts to be true to its theological directive.

6.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have shown that the Bible does provide a very thorough *theological* framework for Christians to be involved in development work. We have attempted the latter by making reference to some themes that constitute a theological focus on Development. Hence engaging development work is not a choice for the Christian individual and church. If we fail to take this responsibility seriously- especially working with the poor- we then fail to fulfill our theological mandate. We fail to fulfill the purpose of the church as expressed by Emilio Castro's statement:

The church is called ... to be an anticipation of the kingdom; to show in its internal life the values of justice and supportive love; to develop a priestly servant vocation in interceding in Abrahamic tradition for the whole human community; to celebrate liturgically, in anticipation, the coming of the kingdom; to watch like the virgins of the parable for the coming of the Lord; and then to be the missionary people of God, called and sent all over the world to proclaim and serve, announcing and manifesting the kingdom of God.¹⁵⁰

The manifesting of such a 'kingdom' involves the humanisation of life as we seek the *shalom* of God in the world. This means that the church must work towards the comprehensive well-being of all people as it draws them into the human community. Addressing human needs and opposing all structures in society that prevents people from being in the 'image of God' is undoubtedly the task of the Christian church. In the next chapter we shall attempt to look at how the church can seek to fulfill this theological mandate in the development of the new South Africa.

¹⁵⁰ EMILIO CASTRO, *Freedom in Mission: The Perspective of the Kingdom of God*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1985, p.62.

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CHAPTER SEVEN : THE CHURCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this research we established that the Christian church has always *had a notion of development and undergirding this is a theology (of development) that the church has not fully understood or adequately embraced*. In order to address this thesis we offered a definition of development as used in this research (chapter Two). We then proceeded to show that the Christian church has always expressed a biblical concern for the poor in its *history* of mission, even though it was often influenced by ideologies in its times which seemed to remove its focus on the poor (chapter Three). This concern for the poor can be seen in the humanitarian activities of the church. However, by the late 20th century we saw the theological miracle of the rediscovery of the Biblical witness to the poor (chapter Four). In chapter Five we looked at two churches doing development and from within this context we identified some of the themes that contribute to a *theology* of development. These themes were further explored and dialogued in chapter Six as we attempted to work towards a theology of development. In this concluding chapter we shall attempt to: (1) show what implications such a theology of development will have for the church in South Africa, and (2) see how the church can contribute to the development of the new South Africa.

7.2 A THEOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the previous chapter we attempted to work towards a theology of development. We shall now seek, in this section, to see how such a theology impacts on the church in South Africa.¹

¹ Note that in the next section (7.3) we shall offer practical examples in which the church can contribute to development in South Africa. For now we are concerned with how a theology of development ought to influence the church.

7.2.1 Development - A Task for the Church

As we have shown in the previous Chapter and elsewhere in this study, development can no longer be an option for the Christian church. The theological mandate given for development means that development is an integral part of Christian ministry. The majority of churches in South Africa tend to see 'social ministries' as a secondary aspect to its purpose in the world.² Such ministries are also usually accompanied with the intent to make 'converts' (Christianise) and they often indicate a paternalistic approach in the care of the poor. However, Jesus came to do more than that, he came to make us *fully human*. Humanisation then is a very necessary part of the Christian mission.³ The churches in our case studies indicate this as they address the human needs in their communities. In order to make people more human the church in South Africa is called upon to address human needs and to oppose all structures and systems that prevent people from being human, as created in the image of God. When the church does this it chooses to follow the example of its Lord.

It is thus imperative for the church to understand that it is involved in development work because of the example set by Christ. As the church it brings its own identity and contribution to the work of development, it must never forfeit this christological basis for seeking to be involved in the transformation of society. Whilst the church should not always openly flaunt this view, it must never at any stage surrender the identity it has in its Lord. It is the example of Jesus that the church follows when it seeks to uplift the condition of the poor and needy in our world. The Pastors interviewed in Chapter Five made it very clear that they were doing what Jesus had done on earth. They therefore see their development work as pointing back to the example of Christ.

There are many Christian development workers who stay clear from identifying their work to the Christian witness to Christ. This, I believe, is the mistake of the church. The success of the churches involvement in transforming society that we looked at in Chapter Five can be related to the fact that they did not hesitate to relate their involvement with the poor because this is what

² We have seen this in some of the interviews documented in the appendices.

³ See our discussion on this in chapter Three.

Christ did and calls us to do. To be simply involved in compassionate ministries without acknowledging the reason for one's involvement with the world is not a position the church should take. It is imperative that the church should always recognise and accept its point of departure in seeking to be involved in development work.

However, it must be pointed out that as the church engages development work its goal must not be Christianisation but humanisation. The church must attempt to be the *loving and transforming presence* of Christ in the world. This means that the church must ensure that their service, purified of any vestige of paternalism or cultural imposition, is not given to induce people to embrace Christianity as a way of life out of gratitude or admiration for the goodwill of the Christian church. The sign or significance must be clear: what is done is the love of Christ lived out in our world. Christian development then must shift our thinking to see development as a process toward holism that culminates in the realisation of *shalom*. The assumption in evaluating holism is that God's covenant to his people is one of *shalom* that brings harmony to all creation.⁴ Effecting *shalom* is not an either-or act. Further, we cannot limit it to salvation in the sense that we separate spirituality from the physical welfare of a person or community.⁵ *Shalom* is not only concerned with people having peace with God – it is also materialistic in its concern for food, clothing and shelter. It symbolises God's care and concern for the welfare of the entire creation.

If the church in South Africa is to truly embrace its theological mandate for development then it is necessary that it first embrace's a more *comprehensive* view of both salvation and mission.⁶ Such a view must see *proclamation and praxis* as integral aspects of Christian ministry. It also attempts to relate the whole gospel to the whole person. This is how the churches studied in Chapter Five view the Church's mission. Addressing *human needs* then must become a priority for the church in South Africa and not a mere secondary duty of the church. This will also require that the church attempts a *social analysis* of the community in which it is found, in order to know the needs of the people the church is required to establish these from the people themselves. If

⁴ See the section on Creation in chapter Six.

⁵ See M. M. THOMAS, *Salvation and Humanisation, Salvation Today: a Contemporary Experience*, Geneva: WCC, 1972, p.59.

⁶ Refer to our discussion on this in chapters Three and Five.

the churches in South Africa are to truly engage development then they would have to take the points made above seriously. They would need to follow the example of the churches we examined in our case studies.

7.2.2 Human Development

The church in South Africa must be involved in economic development because it is part of human development.⁷ It can play an important role in controlling, limiting, and guiding economic behaviour. In this sense the church can provide an *ethic* to development. If carried to extremes the ethical teachings of the church may lead to selfish materialism which is blessed by the church as long as she gets her share of the increased affluence.⁸ Frugality turns into greed, ambition beclouds ethical considerations and deeper spiritual values, and hard work becomes a god. When these extremes are avoided the ethical teachings of the church add a unique, essential foundation to development.

However, economic development is not the only concern of the church in matters of development, even though it is a major concern. The church in South Africa must work towards the integral development of the human person, her progress and advancement in her full human dimension: in the economic and social field, but also in the cultural and educational, spiritual and religious spheres. Christian development means the progress of the whole human person.

But this implies at the same time - and this is an essentially important connotation - that the human person is not only the object of this development but also the deciding subject: that he/she becomes conscious of his/her human dignity, his/ her human tasks and the possibilities for himself/herself and for his/her community, and that he/she is put into the position to share in the shaping of his/her own progress and the progress of the community. Development, therefore, in

⁷ People sometimes suggest that the church has no business getting involved in economic issues. This view is sometimes put forward by people in the government service who suggest that the government is responsible for that aspect of the life of the community. But for centuries the concern of the church has stretched beyond preaching to them. See chapter Three in this study for more information on the latter.

⁸ For example, this can be seen in the Dutch Reformed Church and other churches in South Africa that supported the apartheid ideology.

order to be authentic must promote the good of all people and of the whole person. Social justice and self-reliance are just as important as economic growth.

The kind of involvement the church engages must include the involvement of the poor themselves. The poor must be the driving agents of their own development. They must both fully inform and *participate* in the processes of their own development. We cannot do what some of the early missionaries did. They failed to see how God was already at work in the lives of the people they were attempting to convert. They failed to take the views, culture, beliefs and practices of the local people seriously.

Christian development, as with all other development, must seek to involve the people concerned in their own development. As the church in South Africa seeks to get involved in development it must be careful not to allow itself to give a blanket approval to development projects and programmes. It must first test to see if the latter adopts a people-centred approach to development. Do these projects, programmes and processes in themselves allow the *people to grow*? Are the programmes and projects aligned to sustainable development? Is consideration given to other forms of life on planet earth? In this sense the church in South Africa is called upon to express care and concern for the environment.⁹

7.2.3 Human Community and Solidarity

As our case studies have shown, the Church in South Africa must work towards the establishment of the *human community*. God's covenant is with communities, not with individuals. The Bible repeatedly addresses spirituality in the context of community. The Lord's Prayer, for example, uses the plural pronouns *our* and *we*. New Testament writers always used the term *saint* in its plural form. Therefore, Christian development must focus on communities instead of individuals. If a project benefits individuals at the expense of the community's welfare, it is not holistic. One person cannot experience *shalom* in spite of, or at the expense of, the

⁹ For a more detailed discussion on this see DAVID FIELD, *Modernity, Reformed Theology and the Environment*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Cape Town: Cape Town, 1998.

community.

In his attempt to make a person fully human Jesus also brought the individual into a *relationship* with the whole human community and encouraged them to share in the *resources* within that community. In this sense the church goes beyond community and speaks of love for the neighbour. Christian love suggests a quality of relationship and an *equality* of membership as individuals acknowledge their place in the human community. The church in South Africa is called to work toward the establishment of human community. And where human beings are struggling for their human dignity the church is called to be in *solidarity* with them in their suffering for their rights as people created in the image of God.¹⁰

As the church in South Africa attempts to establish human community it may become necessary for it to also work with other organisations, institutions and faiths that are working toward the same end, our case studies have no doubt shown us the value of this. This is a very important strategy for the church. It is an impossible task for the church, state or any other organisation to embark upon development work by themselves. This is why there is a need for the Church to enter into partnerships with others as it addresses the needs of the poor in our country. What are some of those partnerships?

7.2.3.1 State and Church

Early church history show that the church and the state always worked hand in hand, sometimes to the advantage of the church and other times to its disadvantage. In the early days of Christian development, it was the state that enabled the rapid spread of Christianity. Wherever a country was annexed or conquered, its citizens were forced to become Christians. It is also a known fact that often imperialism was synonymous with Christian expansion. This continued throughout history.

¹⁰ See examples of how the church can do this in the case studies examined in chapter Five. We see here a conscious effort of these churches in their solidarity with the sufferings of the poor.

In South Africa, the early missionaries also brought with them Western imperialism. They were guided by Western models of economic growth and ideologies adopted from close ties with their government. This influence certainly found its way into South Africa and Africa as a whole. Hence in South Africa it led to the establishment of a so-called "Christian" state. Unfortunately, the government's policy of apartheid, which led to the oppression and dehumanisation of the country's majority population, brought not only the state into disrepute but also the church. We have learnt from our own history and experience that it is not good to the witness our lord Jesus Christ that the church should completely identify itself with the state. Consequently, many church leaders in South Africa have argued for a neutral state that does not completely identify itself with any one particular religion or faith. This is also our view.

There are those, however, who maintain that the good news of the gospel includes close co-operation between church and state. In the face of the Western dichotomy between "spiritual" and "secular", Mbiti holds out for an integral relationship between all human institutions.¹¹ The state can be an instrument of God's mission, and the church can promote mission by maintaining good relations with the state:

Since the church is an instrument of good in society, and since most of those who pay taxes in Christian Africa are Christian, and since the majority of those who serve in government are also Christian, there is no reason why a closer relationship between church and state cannot work for the benefit of God's people both in and outside the church.¹²

Tokyo Sexwale, however, pleaded for the separation of the church and state in an address to Church leaders: "The church is not the state and it must be separate. The distance between ourselves and yourselves must be identifiable and you must be far enough from us to be able to see us clearly... You must be able to see us in our full glory and also in our dishonour, should dishonour occur. That is the challenge to the church today."¹³

¹¹ J. MBITI, *Op.cit.* p.196.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ T. SEXWALE, *Church and State*, In *Being The Church in a New Land*, Johannesburg: SACC, 1995, p.9.

John Calvin who attempted to establish a theocracy in Geneva, of course, worked very closely with the state. Though in theory the two were separate, but in practice absolute separation was clearly impossible. In Calvin's view the church had four tasks vis-a-vis the state.¹⁴ In the first place, the church must pray for the political authorities. He maintained that:

Since God appointed magistrates and princes for the preservation of humankind, however much they fall short of the divine appointment, yet we must not on that account cease to love what belongs to God, and to desire their preservation. That is why believers, in whatever country they live, must not only obey the laws and the government of magistrates, but likewise in their prayers supplicate God for their salvation.”¹⁵

Calvin lays emphasis repeatedly upon the duty of obedience to magistrates as viceregents of God.

Secondly, the church must encourage the state to defend the poor and weak against the rich and powerful. This is important for us because it places the church squarely against all economic injustice and makes it quite clear that preaching the gospel is linked with the demand for social justice.

Thirdly, the task of the church is that of ensuring its own status by calling on the political authorities for help in promoting true religion and even enforcing ecclesiastical discipline. The fourth task of the church is to warn the authorities when they are at fault.

Although we see a distinction between the church and state we see a need for the church and state to work together for the mutual benefit of society in building human community. We must not expect the state to do the work of the church nor must we do the work of the state. Whilst the church must involve itself in development work it must realise that it does so because of its biblical mandate to care for the poor and needy and not because it chooses to help a new

¹⁴ W. F. GRAHAM, *The Constructive Revolutionary*, Op. Cit., pp.60f.

¹⁵ Ibid.

democratic government. This then implies that there are boundaries and limitations to the church's working with the State.

In its attempts to transform individuals and society the church must always assess its practical involvement from its theological and biblical mandate. There can be no blanket involvement in development work without the firm acceptance that we have a definite and unique point of entrance into such involvement, namely: the Good News of Jesus Christ. The church must not and ought not to forget this point of entry into development work. The Pastors in our case studies accept that the church has to work with the government but recognise that there are limitations to such a partnership. We see this especially in the case of the Moses Maren Mission.

7.2.3.2 The Ecumenical Church

The churches in the case studies seem to have a very strong desire to work with other denominational groups in their community. The Pastors are of the opinion that unless they do so they will not be able to meet the challenges of development. There is a message in this for the church in South Africa.

The success of development work in South Africa through the Church requires a deeper fostering of an ecumenical spirit and partnership. There must be a pooling of the churches human and material resources to improve the conditions of the poor. Only when denominations come together can they make a significant impact in the transformation of our country through properly organised programmes in development. I have seen the reality of this in Madagascar where more than seven churches have come together to develop that poverty-stricken island. In fact, they were doing more to improve the quality of life of the poor than the government of the day. Other countries on the continent of Africa have experienced the same. The church can do marvellous deeds when it learns to stand together.

Unfortunately, it seems that the church in South Africa is seriously lacking in the true spirit of ecumenism. John de Gruchy establishes that there is a growing spirit of denominationalism

prevalent in the last few years in South Africa.¹⁶ To this, we must add that the major barrier to the spread of Christianity in South Africa is the church. We have become too ecclesiastically centred. It is concerned with the development of ecclesiastical structures. It is not primarily concerned with the development of God's work amongst the people of Southern Africa.

We need to shift our focus from this ecclesiocentric obsession to become more 'kingdom'-minded. The main thrust of Jesus' ministry on earth was the establishment of the Father's 'kingdom' not to build earthly empires. This too must be the focus of the church if we want to follow in our Lord's example.

Apartheid drew some churches and individual Christians together to fight against the oppression and exploitation of the masses. Indeed, the voice of the ecumenical movement was heard worldwide, especially through some of its charismatic leaders. This can be seen in the sanctions that were imposed on the apartheid government, the success of the divestment campaign and the international interest in South Africa at that time and still.

It is true that many churches did not support the South African Council of Churches then for various reasons. However, even now that does not seem to have changed significantly. In this light, we have to recognise that the problems that the SACC has been going through are not due to the drying-up of overseas funding. They are due to the fact that South African churches do not believe in ecumenism. They say they do, but they will not put money into it nor are they willing to share their human resources. They see it as something extra on top. The concept of God at work using the church as a development organisation to bring the ruling power of God into being into South Africa is something which is very largely foreign, it seems, to many people in the church.

Another notable fact in South Africa is that there are some churches that are inclined to attempt to do it all by themselves. They embark on poverty eradication programmes, all by themselves.

¹⁶ J.W. De GRUCHY, *Becoming the Ecumenical Church*, in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, B. PITYANA & C. VILLA-VICENCIO (eds.), Johannesburg: SACC, 1995, p.12.

One does not dismiss their initiatives taken in this regard, but one is prone to question the motives behind such self-initiatives, especially when existing ecumenical organisations are ignored.

The time has come for the various denominations in South Africa to stop “playing church” and to engage ‘kingdom’ business and ideals. The task of the church is to be God’s mission in the world: To be the bearers of the good news in the midst of so much of bad news. To take its place as the redeemed and reconciled community in Jesus Christ calling people into repentance and to share in the transformation of society and the establishment of a just order. Also to affirm human life and work towards a just and sustainable future, to be the presence of God’s love, healing and *shalom* in the world and, to be a pastoral and prophetic voice in this country. If the church in South Africa is to be successful in creating human community then all denominations are required to work together for the well-being of all human beings. The churches examined in the case studies all cross denominational boundaries to uphold the interest of the poor and suffering.

The SACC is thus called to embrace the new challenges that confront them. In the past, they served as the champions in the struggle for liberation. We are now clearly at a new point in our historical journey as a nation in the making. The challenge facing South Africa is that of reconstruction and development in creating a genuinely democratic non-racist and non-sexist society. As de Gruchy reminds us, this has direct implications for the ecumenical church in South Africa.¹⁷ He further advises that the ecumenical church will have to recognise the inseparable relationship between the unity of the church and its witness, between ecclesiology and ethics as well. He sounds an added warning that unless this happens, the SACC, for example, will then become simply another NGO or welfare organisation, rather than a vital expression of the church of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ This is a very significant point.

In an interview with the head of the development unit at the SACC, I posed the question: “What is the difference between you and the Government and the NGO down the street

¹⁷ J.W. de GRUCHY, *Becoming the Ecumenical Church*, in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, p. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

concerning development work?”¹⁹ The response was, “nothing, because we are all doing the same thing.” I pointed out then that this was incorrect because the church has a definite reason for seeking involvement in development work: the example of Jesus Christ. Unless the church understands and preserves its purpose for such involvement it will lose its sense of identity and its unique contribution to the country.

The SACC needs to overcome its ‘activist’ mentality to engage a creative process in channelling the church into fulfilling God’s mission in the world. It needs to embark on a constructive process in drawing non-participating churches into the ecumenical movement. It must become truly a council of *churches*. It needs to foster corporate consensus and closeness with the churches.²⁰

The task of development is a massive one. To think that we can do it by ourselves is a gross misperception. The churches need to join forces and effort in this regard. We can be more successful if we become truly ecumenical in our spirit. This is God’s world. We must be moved by His Spirit to pray: “Your kingdom come and let your will be done!” The churches in South Africa need to join together in addressing the needs in our country. They need to work together in resisting and changing structures in society that prevent human community. However, in so doing it must always ensure that the poor themselves are at the centre as the participating agents of change to their own lives. When the church does the latter it will avoid paternalistic tendencies in its care and concern for the poor.

7.2.3.3 NGO’s

Some of the churches in the case studies (for example, The Moses Maren Mission and the Salvation Army) show us that the church needs to link with civil society and NGO’s in order to address the needs of the poor in our country.²¹ It needs to particularly join forces with

¹⁹ Personal interview was conducted in October 1996.

²⁰ Personal interview with the then General Secretary of the SACC, Rev. Charity Majiza, in October 1999.

²¹ For a detailed discussion on the definitions of civil society and NGO’S see I. BATISTA, “God’s People in Civil Society, in *The Reconstruction And Development Programme*, pp. 223-229.

organisations that deal with the socio-economic, cultural and political development of people. In this regard it may also team up with business and the private sector. Our case studies have shown that where the churches had done the latter their developmental projects and programmes have been immensely successful.

However, in its associations with these organisations the church must never lose its own identity. This is important, as we have already said, because it defines clearly why Christians are to be involved in development.

7.2.3.4 Other Religions

The churches in our case studies tell that as long as the church is called upon to work toward the improvement of the quality of life of the poor and oppressed, it must not refuse the opportunity to work with the other faiths in South Africa. South Africa is a religiously pluralistic country. Most other religions in South Africa also take the needs of the poor seriously and they also have development programmes and projects. The church can do well to join with these in seeking to help and enable the poor. We have seen in South Africa how the working together of the different religions has helped to dismantle apartheid. It is now necessary for the church to work with these different faiths in the building of a new South Africa. The churches in our case studies recognise the importance of this in addressing the needs of the poor. They are thus 'open to' or are already working with the other faiths in certain development projects.

I am aware that there are many denominations and Christian individuals who will have tremendous difficulty with the latter suggestion. They argue for the exclusivity of the Christian faith based on the claim that one can only be saved by Jesus Christ and thus regard any association with non-believers as unacceptable.²²

²² This view, for example, is expressed by The Evangelical Alliance in South Africa. They are even selective of which churches they work with.

Whilst one may have such a view about salvation and Jesus that does not necessarily mean that we are not called to work with or witness to non-Christians. On the contrary, if the whole world is to know about the saving grace of Christ then Christians are expected to connect with people of other faiths. Hence, the church should not resist opportunities in working with other faiths in attempting to improve the lives of the poor in our country.

In all situations and struggles of the poor the church should not try to strive alone, especially where other faiths and ideologies are major influences, and a large proportion of the people actually follow other religions. The church must discern the work of the Holy Spirit in all movements, secular or religious, which are working for a just and creative human society. This process is important for the cause of the poor, but also for enriching the insights and experiences of the church itself.²³ The churches in our case studies, no doubt, reflect such insights in their relationships with leaders of other faiths.

7.2.4 A Vision of a New Society

The churches in our case studies have a vision of society that speaks of justice and equality. They believe that this is what God wills for his people. They are thus working towards the creation of a new society. The church in South Africa needs to embrace the same kind of vision.

The church in South Africa is called to have a *new vision* of society. Development is ultimately about a new vision for society; about a new humanity, about empowerment of people, to experience the full life that God is giving; to respect God's creation. The church takes development seriously, because God takes the pain, the poverty and the suffering in this world seriously. The church takes development seriously because of its very nature and mission in the world. The cross and resurrection of Jesus points to a new vision for the world characterised by God's *shalom*.²⁴ It speaks of the creation of the new human person. The Church is thus called to follow the example of its Lord as it identifies in the struggles of suffering humanity. The way the

²³ JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Towards a Church of the Poor*, Op. cit., p. 193.

²⁴ See the section on the Cross and the Resurrection in chapter Six.

church in South Africa must choose to do this is by *suffering love*. The church in South Africa has grown too accustomed to siding with the rich and powerful.²⁵ It has been deeply influenced by the apartheid ideology. It must now discover what it means to be among the dehumanised and oppressed people. The theological focus on the "kingdom of God" points us to the latter challenge.

The church is the pointer to the "kingdom of God". It has the responsibility to be the sign and presence of God in the world. It must seriously impact the world for Christ and it does this as it becomes the alternative *new society*. It must therefore be involved in development. In this regard there is a theological mandate for development. This theological mandate is embodied in the mission of the Church as it seeks to be the sacrament, servant, and sign of God's presence in the world. Orlando Costas points out the goal of this mission in relation to the Third World:

The ultimate goal of Third World missions should be the final revelation of the Kingdom (of God), understood as the total transformation of history by Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit. This will involve the redemption of creation, the definitive abrogation of evil, chaos and corruption and the birth of a world of love, peace and justice. Third World missions, as any Christian mission, should see themselves, fundamentally, as witnesses to the coming kingdom.²⁶

²⁵ This is, of course not true of all the churches in South Africa. Alan Boesak establishes this fact as he refers to the Ecumenical Church. He says:

It was the church that confronted the issue of racism head-on. It was the church that placed on the agenda of governments, before most governments had the courage to do so, the question of the rights of women. It was the church that helped in the debates with the United Nations to distinguish between individual rights, which the West was so glib about, and social rights, which the West did not even want to discuss until almost only five years ago. It is still a debate in our society, even now, and it was the church that said it is not enough to say you must have free speech because you can make as many speeches as you like if you don't have bread on the table your basic human rights are undermined. And so the church has...a record that we can fall back upon - a firm foundation, style of looking at things that has proved itself to be correct." (See Boesak's paper: *The Church and the RDP*, in *The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP): The role of the Church, civil society and NGO's*, Report of the Third Church and Development Conference, RENIER KOEGELENBERG (ed.). Ibid.

²⁶ ORLANDO E. COSTAS, A Strategy for Third World Missions, in *World Missions-Building Bridges or Barriers*, Theodore Williams (ed.), Bangalore: WEF Mission Commission, 1979, p. 36.

The “kingdom of God”, however, is not just a future, transcendent reality. It is also a present and eminent order of life, characterised by the forgiveness of sins, the formation of a new community, and commitment to a new ethic. This order of life is centred on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence to witness to the ‘kingdom’ is to declare the name of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of humankind.

This in turn implies that the announcement of Jesus Christ in the world has personal, communal, and socio-political dimensions. Personal, in the sense that it is accompanied by the call to faith and repentance and the concomitant experience of forgiveness of sin. Communal in that it implies incorporation into the church, understood as a community of faith and commitment. And socio-political, in the sense that it involves a new life-style based on love, whose practical expression is justice and ultimate hope is peace (or well -being) for all people. If the church in South Africa is serious about *being* the church in our land then it must embrace this holistic concept of mission as it relates to the “Kingdom of God”. The church needs to work toward the development of a society characterised by justice, peace and equality. The “Kingdom of God” is an important concept for the churches in our case studies. They have before them a vision of the new society as they look forward to the coming of God’s ‘Kingdom.’

7.2.5 The Poor: A Challenge to the Church in South Africa

The churches in our case studies tell us that another theological mandate for the church’s involvement in development is the biblical concern for the poor.²⁷ The scriptures are very clear that Jesus had a very special ministry with the poor. If the Church wants to be the church of Christ then it must follow our Lord’s example in this regard. As long as the majority of people in South Africa are poor the church has no option but to take development seriously. Why? Jon Sobrino in his book, *“The True Church and the Poor”*, attempts to show that the Church of the Poor is more closer to the biblical affirmation on being the church of Christ.²⁸ He concluded:

²⁷ See our discussion on this in chapter Four in this study.

²⁸ JON SOBRINO, *The True Church and the Poor*, Op. cit., p.134.

The church of the poor is a church the social and historical basis of which is to be found among the poor. As such, it is a church that has as its basis the majority of human beings, who both individually and collectively constitute the real poor, not only because of their natural condition of poverty, but also because of their historical condition of impoverishment by others. It is these poor, therefore, that are said to constitute the very basis of the church.²⁹

The above comment infers that the church of the Poor is more inclined to the true church of Christ. It is not a church which rules in power and authority but one which serves in powerlessness and humility. The church is not there to be served but to serve its community, as did Jesus Christ himself. The church is not there to acquire wealth and possessions but to dispense and distribute these among the poor and needy (Acts 2). The church is not to exist as a private privilege for a few. The calling is to mission. It is to engage in the announcement of the Lord Jesus; to challenge in his name all powers that afflict and oppress; to be a priestly people interceding for others, Christ's servant people, projecting Jesus' spirit of love in the world, a waiting people pointing towards the promises of God. The churches are sent to love God and neighbour, to follow the path and model of Jesus and with the assurance of the actual power of his lordship to proclaim, teach, discipline and baptise all nations. The church is sent as a servant to all people, with a priestly, missionary and evangelistic vocation.³⁰ Consequently, if the church in South Africa is to take the poor seriously it must also take the challenge of development in the same spirit. We shall now attempt to examine the implications of this for the church in South Africa.

If the church of the poor is more closer to the church of God then a challenge is offered to the more wealthy and powerful churches in South Africa to bring itself in line with God's will and purpose. The implications thereof are, of course, very serious: Firstly, it means that the church must now *identify* (take sides) with the poor and marginalised (like the churches in our case

²⁹ Ibid., p.135.

³⁰ "The specific task of the churches is to disclose the final revelation of God Himself in Jesus Christ, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit establish such visible signs of the Kingdom of God and offer new hope to all who long for a more human world". (I.R.M. Melbourne Reports/Reflections, p.398).

studies). It can no longer identify itself with the powerful and wealthy, even though it ministers among them. Moreover, the church can no longer remain neutral, it must take a side.³¹ The Kairos Document, however, reminds us of the position in South Africa. It states:

To say that the church must now take sides unequivocally and consistently with the poor and the oppressed is to overlook the fact that the majority of Christians in South Africa have already done so. By far the greater part of the church in South Africa is poor and oppressed. Of course it cannot be taken for granted that everyone who is oppressed has taken up their own cause and is struggling for their own liberation. Nor can it be assumed that all oppressed Christians are fully aware of the fact that their cause is God's cause. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Church is already on the side of the oppressed because that is where the majority of its members are to be found. This fact needs to be appropriated and confirmed by the Church as a whole.³²

Whilst we agree with the above statement, we must point out that the minority (white) church in South Africa remains wealthy and powerful. Even though apartheid is something of the past (in that it is no longer entrenched in our constitution) the mindset of some of our churches in South Africa remains the same. The challenge of development is a call for these churches to take sides with the poor.

Secondly, in order to side with the poor the church must itself *become poor*.³³ Jon Sobrino advises that the true church of the poor must look at poverty from the perspective of the

³¹ The church has tried in some instances to "play safe" by adopting policies of neutrality, or ally itself with the powerful when dealing with the problems of the poor. But the church is being challenged by the poor to identify with them if it is truly to become a viable and vibrant agent of God in human development. See the relation of this to the churches in South Africa in ANTHONY BALCOMB, *Third Way Theology*, Op. cit.

³² *Challenge to the Church: A Theological comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa, The Kairos Document*, Springs Advertiser (Pty) Ltd., February 1986, p. 8.

³³ What this means is that genuine involvement with the afflicted and oppressed, in an "out of the depth of" their "needs and life situations", will lead the church to deep conversion: its posture, commitments, attitudes, ideas, ethics, loyalties and thinking will undergo thorough transformation. "A church is a *church* when it embraces the poor, when it participates in the yearning search for justice and emancipation". See J.D. GORT, *Gospel for the Poor?*, Op. cit., p. 334.

Beatitudes.³⁴ Nürnberger states why the church should become poor.³⁵

The less the institutional church is structurally committed, in other words, the poorer the church is, the more free will she be to announce the justice and peace of the kingdom and to denounce those structures and ideologies that keep the poor oppressed. The poorer the church is the more concretely the final order of the total liberation, sharing, solidarity and forgiveness in God's kingdom; for she will have less to lose. Only a poor church will be a church of the poor and for the poor.

In order to be truly a sacrament of salvation, if salvation is understood as a real *kenosis*, the church must accept real poverty, must become poor itself in an act of solidarity with the poor. Poverty, powerlessness and persecution constitute the real and material conditions for a church in keeping with the will of God to arise and for the possibility of an experience of God within such an ecclesial channel to take place.

Perhaps some will resent this notion that the church must become poor. However, let us be reminded that the way of salvation is the way of downward mobility. It is the way of the cross.³⁶ It is the call to give up our privilege and power and to identify with the poor. But that is good news, not bad. It is bad news only for those who worship Mammon. The upward way is the way of death. The cross leads to life. We have been called from death and slavery into life.

After the resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the early Christians were given to live out what Jesus taught them (see Acts 2: 44-45; 4:32-35). If we look forward to the time when God's kingdom is fulfilled, when there will be justice for all, when love and sharing will characterise all relationships, why not begin living that way now? Why should we

³⁴ JON SOBRINO, *Op. cit.*, p.150.

³⁵ KLAUS NÜRNBERGER, *Contending ideologies in South Africa*, *op. cit.* p.300.

³⁶ Rosgathe Mshana adds, "The church is generally an instrument of justice and social integration and transformation. It has inherited the cross and must not accept to be comfortable in society". ROSGATHE MSHANA, *The Relationships between Development Work and other Church Ministries*. A paper presented to the Lutheran World Federation-organised consultation on communication and development, Limuru, Kenya, 1986, p.2. See also G. COOK, *The Expectation of the Poor*, *Op. cit.*, p.129.

pattern our lives after the fallen world with its private property, competition and alienation? The church and Christians ought to be different. What should keep us from sharing our possessions, from living as brothers and sisters? Only our double-mindedness. But we cannot serve both God and money. The will to possess and the desire for community are opposites.³⁷

It is no doubt apparent that some churches in South Africa benefited immensely from the apartheid government. It was not in their interest to protest against the oppressive and unjust policies of the state that disenfranchised, dehumanised and impoverished the majority of people in South Africa. In fact, whilst others declared apartheid a heresy they continued to provide theological justification for the policy of separate development. The will to amass wealth, power and influence was the motivation for these churches. Since the demise of apartheid some of these churches have come out to denounce this policy and admit their failure to stand up against it. However, one wonders whether this would have happened had there not been political changes in this country. Perhaps the sign of true repentance and confession in this regard is for these churches to be involved in the development of the new South Africa. Development in this sense, for them, must involve the redistribution of resources.

The call of Jesus is to become poor, to identify with the oppressed, to cast our lot with the downtrodden. Real love leads us to become one with the homeless (maybe by opening our homes and churches to them). This is the logic of the Incarnation. We are called to a life of poverty because of our deep identification with Jesus as our norm and example. He became poor, vulnerable and empty. He put his whole trust in God. He gave up all he had. Love calls us to give up all we have, too. Becoming poor will require that the church in South Africa *re-structure* itself from the perspective of the poor.

Thirdly, the church in South Africa must *defend* the cause of the poor. It must thus fulfil a role of prophetic denunciation of the grave injustices rampant in South Africa.³⁸ This has to be concretised in criticism of injustice and oppression in the struggle against the intolerable

³⁷ ROBERT G. CLOUSE, *Wealth and Poverty*, Op. cit., p. 139.

³⁸ A church that lives in a situation of injustice but is not able to discover in the light of the Gospel entrusted to it the injustices within its own fellowship is no longer an authentic sign of the "Kingdom of God".

situation that a poor person has to tolerate. The church must not impose a law of silence when the real need is to lend a voice to those who offer injustice and to develop the social and political responsibility of the people of God.

This denunciation is a manner of expressing the intention of becoming disassociated from the unjust order. When a system ceases to promote the common good and favours special interests, the church must not only denounce injustice but also break with the evil system. The denunciation of injustice implies the rejection of the use of Christianity to legitimise the established order. It likewise implies, in fact, that the church has entered into conflict with those who wield power.

There is a debate today about whether the church in South Africa should continue or discontinue its prophetic role of social criticism; whether it should not rather concentrate on its pastoral, caring, affirming and non-critical role. Khoza Mgojo, in responding to this view, states that this seems to be a false question rooted in a dualistic scheme of theological reflection.³⁹ The task of the church is bound up in its being. The church should be prophetic and pastoral simultaneously. John de Gruchy, writing in a similar vein, points out that the church must continue to resist what is unjust and false, and continue to protest on behalf of what is just and true – this is what is meant by *critical* solidarity.⁴⁰ The prophetic struggle against injustice must continue; standing for the truth never comes to an end.

The church must teach both law and the gospel of God. This is the duty of the Church's pastors, teachers, and other leaders. And when the church concludes that biblical faith or righteousness requires it to take a public stand on some issue, then it must obey God's word and trust him with the consequences.

Fourthly, if the church in South Africa is to focus on the poor it will need to re-consider its traditional *theological* positions and views. Theology must take into account the Bible and

³⁹ See KHOZA MGOJO'S paper: The Church In History: Struggle and Challenge, found in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, BARNEY N. PITRYANA and CHARLES VILLA-VICENCIO(eds.), p.10.

⁴⁰ JOHN W DE GRUCHY, Becoming The Ecumenical Church, In "*Being the Church in South Africa*, p.19.

church tradition in expressions of solidarity with the poor besides the struggle of the poor themselves – their frustrations and successes, in achieving development.⁴¹ In most instances the tendency has been to act *on* the poor, not *with* them. Thus the concepts of evangelism, salvation, reconciliation, church, and so on, as they have traditionally been employed, seem to require re-definition in terms of the outlook of the poor and the oppressed. This task demands a commitment to struggle, a decision from the perspective of the poor and in their own terms. In this way the church come to understand a new theology and construct a new language based on the significant elements of the life of the people whose expectations and struggles they are sharing.

Such a theological re-orientation will also require that the church in South Africa strives toward the establishment of *new structures* within the church that makes the poor a priority. It is the poor themselves with their presence and participation in the body of Christ, with their problems and struggles, who make possible the transformation of ecclesiastical institutions. *The church in South Africa needs to empower the powerless.* Far too often church structures have added to the oppression of the oppressed. In order to help develop the poor the church must allow the poor to be the main agents of their own development. This will also imply a shift from the structural church to the *community* church.

Having discussed the challenges a theology of development presents to the Church in South Africa, we shall now attempt to look at some of the concrete areas in which the Church can *contribute* to the development of the country. This is the purpose of the next section.

7.3 AREAS IN WHICH THE CHURCH CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

Although the Reconstruction and Development Programme Portfolio has been dropped by the new government, it continues to be the major responsibility of this government. Apartheid has left behind a legacy of poverty. Hence the measure of success in South Africa will be determined

⁴¹ JULIO DE SANTA ANA, *Towards a Church of the Poor*, Op. cit., p.117.

by the radical change in the quality of life of the millions of impoverished people. The church has a responsibility to champion the rights and the cause of South Africa's impoverished majority if it wants to remain true to the Gospel message. Jesus expressed a particular concern for the poor, this must be the church's concern, too, if it is to follow the example of our Lord.

The church must realise that it needs to be involved in the development of the new South Africa. Both its *mission* and its *theology* provide a necessary mandate for such an involvement.⁴² The church therefore needs to pave the way in creating a new society in accordance with God's will of justice and equality. In what ways can the church participate in the reconstruction and development of a new South Africa? In referring to some of the things the churches in our case studies are doing, and using a people-centred approach to development we suggest the following ways in which the church can contribute to the development of the new South Africa:

7.3.1 Community Development Programmes

The churches in our case studies are all involved with community development projects and programmes. In some cases they are working with the government and in others they are not. However, they all point us to the need for the Church in South Africa to be involved in community development.

The Christian Church has always involved herself with community development programmes in order to uplift the living conditions of people.⁴³ In the days of apartheid the majority of black townships were neglected. They were not with proper roads, water, electricity, sanitation and recreational facilities. Although the apartheid policy is now scrapped, the majority of townships in South Africa still remain undeveloped. The new government faces a huge challenge in this area of providing poor and neglected communities with these basic needs. It cannot do this alone. It needs the support of other organisations as well. The church needs to get involved in public work programmes.

⁴² We have already shown this in chapters Three and Six in this study.

⁴³ See chapter Three in this study.

Of course, the church should not take full responsibility for this kind of work. It is, after all, the duty of the State. However, the church can help in a variety of ways. Before you attempt to build a community you must first have a sense of community. The church already has this. It is a community of believers called together in the name of Christ and it is sent into the world to proclaim the good news of the 'kingdom' in both words and deeds. Wherever the church is there is a sense of community.

The church has a very widely spread infrastructure and is capable of reaching every corner of our country and every aspect of a person's existence. Probably no other organ of society has the same reach. As a result, the church has a far better grass-root structure and must use it to develop communities by actively engaging community development programmes. The church has an important role in the actual delivery of social services, especially in the identification and mobilisation of communities. Many disempowered communities are often left out because there is no one to champion their cause. The comprehensive network of the church is capable of reaching out to such communities.⁴⁴

One of the major constraints to development is the capacity of local structures to plan and implement development projects. Because of this weakness, many projects either get delayed or abandoned. The church can use its infrastructure to address this problem. As we have seen in our case studies, the church can put pressure on local government to develop the community. It can motivate its people to work toward a clean and healthy environment. It could encourage its members to participate in community development projects and programmes. In this regard it could provide education and training that is also biblically based. For example, the group areas act and forced removals gave rise to a number of informal settlements. These were more often than not turned into slums. The church can offer biblical teaching on caring for the environment because the earth belongs to God. To encourage such care of the environment the church could start projects such as; planting trees, gardening and mobilising the community to keep their environment clean (some of the churches in the case studies were doing this). However, as the

⁴⁴ W.L.NKUHLU, *The Church and Socio-Economic Reconstruction during the Transition*, in *Being Church in a New Land*, Johannesburg: SACC, 1995, p.7.

church attempts all these it must always ensure that it takes a people-centred approach to development. Such an approach means that the people themselves must be involved in all the decisions and processes to transform their community. The involvement of the local people enriches the capacity of service within the community.

7.3.2 Human Dignity

The majority of people in South Africa have been dehumanised and demoralised for a long time. Apartheid made them feel like no people. This is clearly seen in case studies examined in the previous chapter. In fact, the majority of South African blacks still suffer with an inferiority complex. They still have this notion of being second or third class citizens.⁴⁵ Even though apartheid is no longer existent in the laws of our country yet it continues to live in the hearts and minds of people and it will do so for a long time. Our present struggle in South Africa is the issue of racism which has robbed people of their human dignity.⁴⁶ Modern racism is taking many forms, it is no longer just the simple issue of black and white. President Mbeki has on numerous occasions pointed to this fact.⁴⁷ How can the church help in dealing with this? We refer here to some of the things the churches in our case studies are doing to encourage and foster human dignity which need to be adopted by the church in South Africa:

Firstly, the church by the very nature of its mission has the ability to reach into peoples' hearts and minds. It does this through the message of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence the church must never hesitate to proclaim the biblical message that all people are equal before God. It must not choose to remain with a comfortable message when its calling is to speak the truth in love.

Secondly, the church must work towards the restoration of the dignity and self-worth of all those who have been dehumanised. Restoring the dignity of the poor and oppressed is a very

⁴⁵ This is especially prevalent among the rural communities in South Africa.

⁴⁶ The SACC called a conference in October 2000 to discuss how the church can deal with racism. It is good to know that churches are attempting something in this area already.

⁴⁷ For example this was one of his main foci in his address to the nation in February 2001, when Parliament opened.

significant aspect of development. The church has a very powerful message in this regard and it must, through its biblical teaching, show such people that they, too, have been created in the image of God. This has been the attempt of Black Theology. One of the central aims of this theology is to say to all black people that they have worth and dignity too: "Black is Beautiful".⁴⁸ In this regard Black Theology has contributed to human development. Even though there are many people who argue that such a theology is no longer relevant in South Africa today, I believe that it still has a role to play in the area of human development.⁴⁹

Whilst the church can help restore dignity and self-worth to the poor and oppressed by teaching and preaching, we must be reminded that developing the human person without at the same time changing the structures in society that oppress and dehumanise them is of little good.⁵⁰ As Verkuyl puts it:

Merely to tend the victims of unjust structures in society, without at the same time fighting the causes which perpetuate these structures, is also a way of supporting them.⁵¹

This means then that the church in its attempts to develop people must take seriously the responsibility of fighting for the eradication of unjust structures in society.

Thirdly, the church must identify, train and develop leaders to take their place in society. The church also has suffered the sin of not empowering its people. In the old South Africa the Church was (and still is) guilty of placing the rich and powerful in positions of leadership. This obviously led to the domination and exploitation of many potential black church leaders by their 'superiors'. The church can no longer do this. The church can set the example of empowering and developing future leaders both for itself and the country at large. It was the church leaders who struggled for the liberation of the masses in South Africa and many of them are today politicians

⁴⁸ ALAN BOESAK, *Black and Reformed*, Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1984, p.6.

⁴⁹ For more discussions on Black Theology see, MOSALA & TLHAGALE, *The Unquestionable Right To Be Free: Essays in Black Theology*, Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986.

⁵⁰ Liberation theologians in particular have taught us this, see for example, G.GUTIERREZ, *Op. cit.*

⁵¹ J. VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, *Op. Cit.*, pp.198-204.

themselves. The church must continue to develop leaders so that character, integrity, honesty, selflessness, justice and righteousness may be instilled in those who lead others.

Fourthly and finally, human dignity and development requires that the people who are being developed be themselves involved in this process. They must become agents of their own development. People must be allowed through their own organisations and structures to plan and drive development. The commitment to people-centred processes is required at all levels. National ministries, provincial and local authorities must involve stakeholders in policy making and in the actual execution of projects. Development institutions at all levels have to introduce participatory processes and become more transparent and accountable.

It is in this context that the church in South Africa must review its role and strengthen its effectiveness. The church must be able to help people to understand their democratic rights and responsibilities. It must also ensure that such rights must not be sidelined or violated. John de Gruchy in his book, *Christianity and Democracy* looks at the Christian view of democracy.⁵² He points out, "Democracy needs skills and abilities, it needs voter registration and peace monitoring, but it also needs tolerance, respect for others and their opinions, trust, and a commitment to constitutional and legal procedures. If a just democracy and genuinely civil society is to be born and nurtured, it will require considerable effort to cultivate those core moral values which are essential for its existence and success". It is in this respect then that a clear challenge is offered to the church.

7.3.3 Moral Development

Our case studies have shown us how poverty and oppression can lead to moral degeneration. The churches in these case studies (Chapter Five) indicate that coupled with human development is the issue of moral development. We are facing new moral challenges in South Africa today. Apartheid is responsible for the moral decay in our country. It brought with it a promotion of a

⁵² It is not within the scope of this research to discuss the Christian understanding of democracy. However see J.W de GRUCHY, *Christianity and Democracy: A Theology for a Just World Order*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1995.

spirit of self-hatred, self-denigration and a deep sense of cultural alienation. This moral decay created deep cleavages and divisions between whites and blacks, between adults and the youth, parents and children, women and men, and in fact produced a very sick society.⁵³

Consequently, we are experiencing the extension of such moral decay today in the rape of women, the sexual abuse of children, serial killings, trigger happy murders of innocent people, particularly women and children, the breakdown of discipline in many families, high rate of divorce and road rage. This is not to mention the corruption of both public and business officials.⁵⁴

Goba suggests that South Africa is faced with such a moral crisis because as a people we are struggling to redefine who we are, particularly in this period of transition.⁵⁵ There are many people who are riddled with anxiety and fear as they await the eventual outcome of the new South Africa. There are others who are too frustrated because their hope of a better quality of life in the new South Africa does not seem to materialise. As a result they are taking law into their own hands. Still many others, particularly the skilled, are choosing to live and work abroad.

The church as the bearer of a moral tradition has a critical role to play in shaping the moral order of any particular society.⁵⁶ The church must provide the basis for the creation of our nation. It cannot on the basis of seeking 'political correctness' allow the politicians to make rulings on moral matters. We are reminded of the time when the government attempted to pass laws on abortion it conveniently attempted to by-pass the church. However the church took them to task on the matter. The church is an agent for developing morality within society and it must remain true to this task.⁵⁷

⁵³ We have already shown this in our case studies pointing out how the local churches were addressing them.

⁵⁴ B. GOBA, *Choosing Who We Are, A Christian Perspective On The Moral Crisis Confronting the South African Society*, in *An African Challenge To The Church In The 21ST Century*, MONGEZI GUMA & LESLIE MILTON (eds.), Cape Town: Salty Print, 1997, pp. 5-71.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ All religions, of course, are also bearers of a moral tradition. Our focus here is on the Christian church.

⁵⁷ It must be noted that though the church is agreed on the fact that it is a moral agent there are serious differences, even within the same denomination about these issues.

With the escalating crime and violence, break-down of family life, alcohol and drug abuse in our country, the church can do much to develop people morally and spiritually. How?⁵⁸

- It must hold all elected leaders in our country in great measures of accountability and transparency. When politicians and business leaders and others are found to be corrupt the Church must not hesitate to challenge them. The church must also ensure that all leaders keep their promises made during elections.
- Our country is in desperate need of good role models. Many of our trusted people have failed us and especially our youth. The church must work towards the raising and developing of good and godly leaders. To foster moral development it must lead by example.
- To encourage moral values the church must offer proper biblical teaching on the subject
- The church must identify and deal with the root causes that seem to disturb and destroy the moral values of our society.
- The church has much to teach on family life and values. It must work toward strengthening the home and family values by embarking upon regular programmes and projects so that it may be able to recapture the essence of family life.

7.3.4 AIDS

AIDS is a disease that results from an infection with a retrovirus called the human immune-deficiency virus (or HIV), which causes a total breakdown of the body's natural immune system. AIDS is threatening to destroy the New South Africa. There are more than 4.5 million people who are said to be HIV positive and the numbers are increasing daily.⁵⁹ Our country already has an increasing number of AIDS orphans and more than 37 percent of pregnant women in ante-

⁵⁸ Here we draw on the examples of some of the things the churches in our case studies are doing.

⁵⁹ Information provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

natal clinics are said to be HIV-positive. AIDS has some very serious economic, political and social implications which no doubt concerns the church.

The AIDS crisis which has descended upon our world so suddenly and unexpectedly presents the church of today with a major challenge both theologically and pastoral.⁶⁰ Perhaps more than any previous disease in our history, it raises for Christians problems of morality, sin and God's providence. Despite the growing incidence of AIDS it is not just another disease like TB or even cancer. AIDS is characterised by its irrevocable nature, by the fact that it is sexually transmitted, by the stigmatism it fuels and by the awareness it creates of the imminence of death.

The crisis AIDS is causing has actually revealed the inadequacy of the moral and theological assumptions of very many Christians. For example, a theology of judgement has attracted considerable attention by claiming that AIDS is God's way of punishing certain groups of people (gays and drug addicts) who live promiscuous and sinful lives. The proponents of this theology maintain that those who contract the disease must be treated as sinners and be rejected and ostracised from the community. They fail to realise that not all people with AIDS have contracted the disease through promiscuous living.

Other Christians, however, propagate a compassionate and caring involvement with people with AIDS instead of condemnation and rejection. The Bible, of course, provides more support for a *compassionate* response than for one of judgement. Human beings like to have explanations for various happenings and circumstances. It is understandable that we try to apportion blame which somehow makes us feel better. Jesus, in his day, faced a similar question with the man who had been blind from birth.⁶¹ His disciples asked him: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?" (John 9:2). Jesus, as we know, did not apportion blame to anyone. He cured the man of his physical blindness and pointed out to the crowds that their judgement of the man and his situation showed them to be spiritually blind.

⁶⁰ AIDS is not solely a medical problem to which medical solutions must be sought. As long as there is no cure, it is primarily a spiritual and psychosocial matter; it is also a community matter (for a community such as a church)

⁶¹ See JERRY PILLAY, *The Church and AIDS*, In *General Assembly Papers*, Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, 1991, p199f.

We may not be HIV positive ourselves; we may not have AIDS ourselves; but if our attitude is one of judgement or of blame, there is a sense in which we are spiritually sick, and need to be healed by Jesus (see John 9: 1 – 41). Instead of questioning another person's ethics, we need to look at our own behaviour towards people in need, even if we argue that the person is responsible for his or her situation (Matthew 7: 1-3).

When we are too busy justifying our own behaviour and lifestyle we may forget that Jesus calls us to reach out in love and compassion to anyone in need. The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 provides an object lesson for us here. After stating that one is to love God and love one's neighbour, Jesus tells this story of the man who was robbed, injured and left half-dead beside a road and the Samaritan who cared for him. It should be emphasised that nothing is known about the injured man, other than that he was in need. Everything about the victim was irrelevant to Jesus, except his need. A person's need, and that alone, is sufficient to require of God's people a loving response.

Hence, in the light of the seriousness of the AIDS crisis, the church is called on to exercise a healing, caring and compassionate ministry towards people living with AIDS.⁶² The church also needs to acknowledge that ministry to AIDS and HIV-infected people by a few "specialists", is no longer enough. It is increasingly becoming a mandate facing every local congregation. AIDS challenges the church to be forthright in its call for scriptural morality and to be a saving, healing and comforting presence in society. Some Christians emphasise only the caring aspect of ministry. However, the church is called to be much more than a mere caring community. It must also prepare people for death and point them to Jesus Christ. However, it is particularly in the area of measures to alleviate the scale of human suffering that the church needs to be challenged to effective action.

In light of the threat posed by AIDS we need to develop our moral understanding. The kind of moral sensitivity we are talking about begins with a willingness to learn more about AIDS and to create opportunities for educating people about the disease and how to act toward its sufferers

⁶² Ibid., p.201.

and their family and friends. Our plea is that we do more than simply obtain the necessary information; we need to educate and motivate people to help patience suffering in isolation.

Helping people with AIDS will become too great a task for any one denomination to tackle by itself, especially in view of the economic and social effects of the disease. It may be necessary for the church to extend its ministry in and support to hospices and care centres for people with AIDS.⁶³ The church will need to join with other organisations in addressing the AIDS crisis in South Africa.

7.3.5 Cultural Development

As part of its responsibility of building the nation the church must take seriously the need of attending to the values of African culture. In the previous political regime little or no consideration was given to African culture, values and practices. It is imperative now under our new democracy that we learn and discover together what it truly means to be African.

President Mbeki has said much about this in his attempts to foster what he calls an 'African Renaissance'. The church needs to also make its contribution to this end. Whilst respecting and accepting the variety of cultural affiliations prevalent in South Africa the church must help interpret and integrate these as part of its endeavour to build a nation.

The early missionaries who came to South Africa were guilty of imposing their western cultural beliefs and ideologies with their teachings on Christianity (this can be clearly seen in our case studies). As a result, the African contributions to Christian beliefs were not taken seriously. They were usually written off as pagan and any attempt to understand Christianity from an African perspective was accused of syncretism.⁶⁴ As part of its contribution to the African Renaissance the church is challenged to do theology from the African world-view. Hence, African Christian Theology – which does theology from the perspective of African norms, values, practices,

⁶³ Note in this regard the work of the St Anthony's Church in our case study in the appendix.

⁶⁴ It must be noted that African Theology cannot be regarded as exclusively *religiocultural* but is increasingly concerning itself with the *socioeconomic and political problems* of post-colonial Africa.

beliefs, tongue and experience— has a very constructive role to play in the developing of the nation. The African Independent Churches have a very vital role to play in the design of a development theology and a theology for the conservation of the environment.⁶⁵ It is imperative that denominations encourage and facilitate such theological developments, which will certainly help to unite the nation.⁶⁶

The church is in a unique position to encourage cultural tolerance, education and acceptance because millions of people in South Africa from different races, tribes, colour, languages and cultural backgrounds belong to it. In order to build our nation in this regard it is important for the church to start promoting the same in its life, work, witness and worship. We must give people the freedom to express themselves in languages they are most comfortable with, especially in meetings where the whole denomination gets together. The church should endeavour to embrace cultural views and expressions in its worship. The plea must not be for uniformity but diversity that allows and empowers people to express their love and devotion to God in ways in which that brings fulfilment to them. Since liberation is not just an economic process but also includes the development of the outlook of the oppressed, the church of the poor should make its liturgy an expression of the work and culture of the poor as a setting in which they can both discover and experience their own identity.⁶⁷ People's experiences should be incorporated in the act of worship and these experiences should become the formative principle of worship. The thoughts and feelings of the poor must find a place in the liturgical celebrations of the church of the poor.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See J.S. MBITI, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986. J.S. MBITI, *The Biblical Basis for Present Trends in African Theology*, in *African Theology en route*, vide Appiah-Kubi & Torres, 1979.

⁶⁶ See J. SEOKA, *African Culture and Spirituality*, in *An African Challenge To The Church In The 21ST Century*, pp. 1-10.

⁶⁷ It is in this perspective that the quest for indigenisation of the church must be understood; one of its major expressions is at the level of the liturgical life of the Christian community. It must be noted that "indigenisation" does not only imply that cultural elements be taken into account in the celebration of Christian worship but also that social aspects and emphases be integrated in the liturgy. See JULIO DE SANTA ANA (ed.), *Towards a Church of the Poor*, Op. cit., p.168.

⁶⁸ Baptism and the Lord's Supper are an expression of God's involvement in the everyday world. The church of the poor should regard and use them as material signs of transformation.

The church by virtue of the fact of what it is called to do and the unique position it has in society, together with its already established infrastructure, must take the lead in building and uniting the nation culturally and politically.

7.3.6 Land and Development

Central to the building of the nation is the issue of land. In fact the ownership of land is a very important aspect of African culture. In the apartheid era, through force removals and the enactment of the group areas act, the most productive and fertile land were taken away from black people and given to white farmers.⁶⁹ It is said that, on the one hand, around 60 000 white farmers own and control 85 per cent of all agricultural land in the country, which amounts to approximately 86 million hectares. The average size of white-owned farm is 1,300 hectares. On the other hand, about 4 million families in the former homelands have access to only 15 million hectares and a plot of land averaging 1.5 hectares in size.⁷⁰

The government in South Africa is attempting to deal with this imbalance in land distribution through its 'Democratic Land Reform Policy'. The church must inform the moral and ethical aspects of this policy. Moreover, it must ensure and guide the democratic and legal processes that encompass the restitution and redistribution of land.

The church is also guilty of acquiring land under apartheid because black people were not allowed to own land. Even the early missionaries were guilty of robbing the indigenous people of their land, as the saying goes: "When the missionaries came they had the Bible in their hand and the people had the land, today the missionaries have the land and the people have the Bible in their hand." As the church calls for the restitution and redistribution of land it must do so by first setting the example itself. The church must be prepared to lose land, in exchange for reasonable compensation, for the benefit of the landless communities. The church must also return the land

⁶⁹ All the communities in our case studies are victims of 'force removals'. They are where they are now because they were 'dumped' there by the apartheid regime.

⁷⁰ See P.G. MAYENDE, The Land Question: Prospects for the next millennium, in *An African Challenge to the Church in the 21st Century*, pp. 36-37.

which communities ceded to it in a bid to avert apartheid disposessions. In short, the church must take a position on land reform, and reclaim the high ground on which it stood during the struggle against apartheid atrocities.⁷¹ It needs to do this if it is serious about building a new nation.

Relating the land issue in South Africa to a people-centred approach to development, Gcobani Vika puts it in proper perspective in the following comment:⁷²

The church needs to develop a programme that provides alternative paradigms for land reform with development as the core. It should not merely act as a watchdog that barks when things are not well, but must instead complement what the government is seeking to apply as corrective and therapeutic measures to the enormous injustices of the past. Such programmes must be determined by the needs of the people: A needs analysis therefore will be the first step towards the realisation of any proposed programme. Salvation, we may say, is not possible where there are gross social imbalances which deny people their dignity, integrity and full humanity. As long as these persist, the struggle for social justice has no end point.

7.3.7 Reconciliation and Healing

The communities that we looked at in the case studies describe people who are hurting. Apartheid may be a thing of the past but its legacy of hurts, sufferings, wounds and painful experiences continues to surface in the present. The complex history of South Africa necessitates the twofold ingredient of reconciliation and healing to become part of the process of transformation, in “healing a broken people” in our country.

It is a known fact, that people who have gone through dramatic experiences of gross human rights violations, viz. torture, assassinations and massacres and the like reminiscent and make

⁷¹ Ibid., p.40.

⁷² GCOBANI G. M. VIKI, Land Reform and Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Recipe for Anarchy, in *Journal of Theology for South Africa*, Op. cit., p.54.

known their plight by talking about them, they experience healing. In order to facilitate this process of healing in our land the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established. Many have shared their stories, recorded the facts and relived their horrible experiences during the sitting of the Commission. Whilst the TRC has helped many to receive healing, the whole issue of amnesty and reparations remain in question. It is here that the church must hold the government to its promises.

The church has a vital role to play in bringing about reconciliation and healing in South Africa. It ought to do this because many of its own members have become victims themselves or they have been affected in some way or another. Likewise, the church can also encourage its members who have promoted the evils of apartheid, in whatever way, to seek repentance and forgiveness.

Reconciliation and healing is the business of the church. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, became incarnate to reconcile the fallen person with God. It was the love of God that sent Jesus to the cross. It can be seen that reconciliation was not cheap. However, love and forgiveness must be the focus of the church. We must not seek to apportion blame or point fingers for that would get us nowhere. This, however, does not mean that we must not seek the truth or even justice, for that matter. It is a biblical fact that the truth shall set us free. It is also a biblical fact that we serve a God who advocates justice.

Alan Boesak has pointed out that the politicians and journalists have claimed the concept of reconciliation from the church making it a buzzword in the new South Africa.⁷³ He pleaded with the church to reclaim it and to emphasise the biblical injunction that reconciliation is really not possible without confrontation – confronting what we are, confronting what we have been, confronting what we have done. Reconciliation is not possible while one tries to cover up the sins, to paint over the cracks - they have to be uncovered for reconciliation to take place (Luke 19).

⁷³ A. BOESAK, The Church and the RDP, in *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: The Role of the Church, Civil Society and NGO's*, p27.

The church in South Africa must enable people to arrive at the truth, seek repentance, forgiveness and healing. It is a matter of fact that unless this happens we will fail in our attempts to build a new nation. The church has the right to pave the way in this responsibility for the following reasons:

- a) *The church is itself a Reconciled Community.* To be a Christian is to be part of a witnessing *Koinonia* which Jesus Christ himself had created by his life and which he had sealed with his death and resurrection. Hence, as the unique new creation of God, the church is a community of people, who through his grace have been reconciled with him. Therefore, believers are grateful and humble people, who know that all they possess is a gift of grace. As members of the church and as churches who have been reconciled to God, and to one another through the blood of Jesus Christ and have received his peace in their hearts, they must continue and persevere in the ministry of reconciliation and serve one another in a spirit of love and peace.
- b) *The Church is the Community of the Redeemed.* It has been saved and restored by the precious blood of the Lamb. It knows what it truly means to be forgiven. In the light of this, it can teach its members and others what it means to forgive when you have been forgiven. It must be pointed out, however, that forgiveness does not mean forgetting, as so many people in our country seem to think. Instead, it means looking at the past through new eyes that enables the sinned-against to receive peace and restoration.
- c) *The Church is a Community of Love.* It knows what it means to receive love even against its deserving. The love of Jesus was clearly expressed for us on the cross of Calvary, 'while we were yet sinners Christ Jesus died for us' (Rom. 5). And so, because we have received such love we can proclaim what it means to love those who persecute us. The church by its very nature and mission serves as a powerful agent of reconciliation.
- d) *The Church is also a Healing Community.* Jesus was a great healer. He went about restoring and healing the broken-hearted, cripple, lame, blind, deaf, dumb and the sinner.⁷⁴ But the

⁷⁴ Refer to chapter 6 section 6.2.1.2.

Great Healer went further still: the lonely were comforted, the moral reprobates were forgiven, the harlot was cleansed, and the cheating tax-collector was transformed to live a life of service to others. His healing of people was not just external but deeply internal as well. He restored individuals emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and socially. The church in South Africa is challenged to be the *healing presence* of Christ in our land. The healing community is one where the poor can see, touch, smell, and hear the presence and power of the living Christ. We cannot, however, give this wholeness to another person. We can only create the safe and secure environment where the healing can take place.⁷⁵ It is here that the redeemed communities become “the Balm in Gilead that heals the sin-sick soul.” The very act of *sharing* pain with the distressed begins to create an environment where wholeness can be discovered. The Christian development worker, individually or in community, can never by his or her own actions remove all the causes of pain and suffering. But in confronting those causes of pain, as wounded healers they become a guide to the hurting ones, a glint of hope for those on the verge of giving up. Healing the wounds of apartheid in South Africa requires the involvement of the church because in essence the church is called to be the healing presence of God in the world.

- e) The majority of churches in South Africa consist of a mixture of people from different cultural, ethnic and race groups and as such it has the ideal facility to promote reconciliation and healing in our land. Though people may be members of the same church their experiences in life may be vastly different because of the tragedy of apartheid. The church must not resist the opportunity of bringing its members together and embarking on exercises to foster reconciliation and healing. It can be certain that such endeavours by the church will have a rippling effect throughout the nation, especially if the greater part of the South African population is said to be Christian. An even greater measure of success in this attempt surrounds the church because all its members, no matter their experiences, already have a common unity in the name of Jesus Christ.

⁷⁵ ART BEAL, *Beyond Hunger: The Compassion of Christ in a Needy World*, Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1985, p.200.

It can be seen then that the Church has a very pivotal role to play in the development of the new South Africa. It has a special contribution to make in the area of reconciliation and healing by virtue of its very nature and mission in the world as given to it by its Lord. We cannot truly build a new nation without first seeking to change the hearts and minds of its citizens. This is the task of the church as it calls people into a relationship with Jesus that involves repentance, change and a desire for human community.

7.3.8 Economic Justice

The communities in our case studies suffer injustice and exploitation. The work of the churches amongst them show us that there can be no development without justice, and in particular economic justice. South Africa has received political liberation, however, nothing can really change without the new government having economic power. The minority in the country still possess the wealth of the land and thereby make it virtually impossible for our democratic government to address the past evils of apartheid. For instance, though we are free, we are still trapped in this vicious demon which entails the socio-economic disempowerment of blacks in particular.

In this regards, in order to make a difference to the lives of people in their impoverished circumstances, it is necessary to transform power relations; to shift the balance of power towards the poor, as well as to lay foundations which can help to determine the shape of the society, as a long term measure.

The church in South Africa must therefore challenge the economic system in place. It has the responsible task of ensuring that the poor are not forgotten or left behind. The Rustenburg Declaration made a similar point in the following statement:

The Bible reveals God as a God of compassionate love who has special care for the sinner, the downtrodden, the poor and all who suffer injustice. Obedience to Christ therefore requires that we develop an economic system based on justice,

compassion and co-responsibility, so that those in need benefit more than those who have more than they need. More equitable wealth distribution must go hand in hand with economic growth.⁷⁶

The church cannot sit back and say, “all is well now that we have a new democratic Government.” Wolfram Kistner tells us that, “the people of South Africa today face a similar situation as the people of Israel after their exodus and liberation from Egypt: How can we preserve the liberation that many of us have experienced as a miracle?”⁷⁷ We have the obligation to ensure that the voice of the poor will always be heard.

In order to meet the needs of economic growth and redistribution the new government will have to develop a strategy that reverse the trend away from stagnation towards positive economic growth. An improvement in the quality of life is related to a fundamental restructuring of the economy, which is essential to meet the needs of the majority of the population. A major part of economic growth and improving the quality of life is by opening up the economy, and thereby creating access to those traditionally discriminated at.⁷⁸

The church must enter into the realm of economics and not simply leave it to the trained professionals. In any case, most of these professionals are probably members of the church. Hence, the church should not resist the opportunity to teach these people to apply the Word of God to their professions as well. Perhaps the church should share in the training of our economist - the time has come for us to engage a theology of economics.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Extract taken from the Declaration itself.

⁷⁷ W. KISTNER, Covenant And Reconstruction: A Christian perspective, in *The Reconstruction and Development Programme(RDP): The Role of the Church, Civil Society and Ngo's*, R. KOEGELEBERG (ed.), 1994, pp. 56-66.

⁷⁸ See H. KLEINSCHMIDT, National Development Priorities For A New South Africa, in *Transition And Transformation: A Challenge to the Church*, Op. cit., p. 175.

⁷⁹ For example, an Ecumenical Statement on Economic Life put out by the WCC formulates six basic goals and visions for economic policy. The six goals mentioned in the draft statement are:

1. Affirming Life
3. Work as human vocation
4. Fairness
5. Transparency and accountability of economic power
6. Safeguarding the environment
7. *Koinonia* and stewardship

Economics does not only have to do with growth, it has to deal with people, attitudes and ethics.⁸⁰ And in this regard, the church has much to offer to the shaping of the country's economic policy. Is our government's Economic Programme (GEAR)⁸¹ the right one for our country?⁸² Does it rely excessively on Western economic models that seem to have fostered what Korten refers to as 'cowboy' economics?⁸³ Do we have a just, participatory and sustainable political-economic order? Is special attention paid to the position of vulnerable groups in society and creation as a whole? The answers to many of these problems and issues will have to be found through participatory political processes in which a crucial role is to be played by civil society: worker's organisations, consumer movements, voluntary organisations and the church.

In the process of transforming the South African society and developing a new country the church must be careful to create a just and responsible society. The Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC described this concept as follows:

A responsible society is where freedom of men (sic) who acknowledge responsibility and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it... For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. It is required that economic justice and provision of equality of opportunity be established for all members of society.⁸⁴

See R VAN DRIMMELEN, Economics and Christian Faith in the Ecumenical Context, in *Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, RENIER KOEGELEN (ed.), 1992.

⁸⁰ ARTHUR SIMON, *Bread for the World*, New York: Paulist Press, 1975, p.78.

⁸¹ GEAR stands for Growth, Employment and Redistribution: a Macro-Economic Strategy (1996)

⁸² For example, Vivienne Taylor, in reviewing GEAR from a gender perspective, argues that GEAR continues to afford women low social and economic status. See VIVIENNE TAYLOR, Economic gender injustice: the macro picture, In *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 33 (1997), pp. 9-25. Also Debbie Bonnin has argued that GEAR does little to address contexts of poverty which have arisen out of particular crises such as the political violence of KwaZulu-Natal; nor does it deal adequately with the legacy of apartheid. See DEBBIE BONNIN, Lwalukulu usizi la - Political Violence and Poverty in KwaZulu-Natal, In *Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity* 33, 1997, pp. 64-68.

⁸³ D. C. KORTEN, *Getting to the 21st Century*, Op. cit., pp.40-47.

⁸⁴ See R van DRIMMELEN, Economics and Christian Faith in the Ecumenical Context, in *Church And Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, RENIER KOEGELENERG (ed.), Cape Town: EFSA, 1992, p.47.

Economic justice is and must be a concern for the church. However, if the church is to be true to this end it must, itself, first put its 'house in order'. It is no use pontificating or pointing fingers at others when it is guilty of the same sins. This warning is in place because too often churches have been, and still are, part and parcel of existing political-economic systems. Therefore, churches have to begin with repentance over their past role in society seeking to liberate themselves from their own history. This is especially needed in South Africa today. When the WCC was established in 1948, the Assembly acknowledged the same in the following statement:

We have failed because we ourselves have been partakers in man's (sic) disorder. Our first and deepest need is not a new organisation but the renewal, or rather the rebirth, of the actual churches. May God grant that we hear the call of the Spirit.⁸⁵

Although all Christians would agree that there can be no renewal without repentance, this is one of the most difficult tasks of churches, especially when their membership consists of people who benefit from present economic policies and systems. The first General Secretary of the WCC, W.A. Visser't Hooft, wrote about this:

Since most members of the church are themselves products of bourgeois mentality, only deep spiritual insight will make them aware of the syncretism, the mixture of Christianity and class atmosphere which has come to dominate their church life. Honesty requires us to say that this "deep spiritual insight" is rare; too often there is a gap between church statements and practice. When churches fail to incarnate principles of economic justice in their own practices, they can neither make disciples of their members nor conduct an effective ministry in the political-economic realm. To be a people of God involves the ethical and economic embodiment of faith. Ministries of the churches cannot be divorced from the example which churches and ecumenical organisations set for their own members and for the wider society. Churches which profess preferential options for the poor but invest most of their funds in elaborate church buildings are hardly credible. Conversion, difficult as it is,

⁸⁵ Ibid.

remains a *conditio sine qua non*.⁸⁶

The more affluent churches in South Africa that benefited from the apartheid government are now challenged to embrace economic justice in a truly Christian spirit. Perhaps one of the immediate ways it could achieve this is to share its resources with poorer congregations. These resources must not only be financial but also human. There are many skills, trades and professional abilities that are found in wealthier communities that need to be brought to the disadvantaged people. The church could do well in paving the way in this regard.

However, to level the imbalances of the past, there is a desperate need for empowerment and not just co-option. It is a sore reality that, in many instances, that co-option rendered to the poor, makes them more dependent and powerless. For example, due to the fact that many whites in South Africa have economic power at their disposal, they see themselves as philanthropic-givers and the poor seem to be developing a habit of dependency and apathy.

Therefore, this philanthropic approach with its destructive consequences needs to be rejected and what needs to be propelled is the concept that it is better to equip a poor person with "a fishing rod than a fish". Thus, the Rustenburg Conference (1991) requested churches and organisations to place on their agendas, as a matter of urgency the following matters:

... The need to work towards a new economic order, in which the needs of the poor can be adequately addressed; provision of work for the unemployed; provision of adequate homes and essential services for the poor; the need to work towards parity in standards of living between black and white people; the need to eradicate poverty and hunger; affirmative action to enable transfer of some of the economic power presently in white hands; and affirmative action in relation to women's rights. It is important to remember, at all times, that genuine development work is that which empowers people. In this sphere, it enables them to build organisations that, like a hydroelectric dam, pool their resources and

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.48.

generate power, where previously there was none.”⁸⁷

The church must maintain its prophetic voice in South Africa. It must always direct its attention to the needs of the poor in our country. And whenever and wherever the poor are not taken seriously, the church must challenge the structures and powers that be. Economic justice, especially in the new South Africa, is a central concern for the church.

7.3.9 Unemployment

The majority of people in the communities we studied were unemployed and this, of course, created problems and tension both in the communities and also in the households.

Unemployment is a serious problem in South Africa which also challenges the church as it engages development. In a paper to the EFSA Conference on the Church and Development in South Africa, K. Nürnberger pointed out that the key to development in this country is employment. He referred to this as *the strategic centre of the entire problem*⁸⁸. He proposed that if we could offer an appropriate and reasonably paid employment for all able-bodied persons within the relevant age limits, then much could be done to alleviate poverty in this country.⁸⁹

Unemployment and poverty are certainly intertwined as the information provided by the South African Labour and Development Research Unit at the University of Cape Town indicates: the poor have unemployment rates of about 50% compared with about 4% for the richest 20% of households. The result is that less than 30% of the poor working-age adults are actually working and less than 23% of the very poor (who account for 29% of the population). Nearly half of the poor households are primarily dependent on a state pension (25%) or remittance from relatives (23%).⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Quoted from the Rustenberg Declaration.

⁸⁸ Paper can be found in, *Church And Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, Op. cit. P291ff.

⁸⁹ Ibid. In making this point Nürnberger is not attempting to be simplistic about the issue. He is fully aware of the different issues involved in employment and development. His paper definitely indicates this.

⁹⁰ This data is based upon a survey of 9 000 households all over the country.

To put this in a summarised perspective, W. Thomas, tells us that out of the 40 million people in our country we have a labour force of about 14.5 million people and we only have about 8.5 million of those who are statistically classified as employed.⁹¹

If the church is to take development seriously then it must also address the unemployment crisis in our country. The churches in our case studies are doing the latter as they embark on skills training and job creation projects. As a matter of fact, the Bible has much to say about work. Work is not something we do apart from God, as the secular worker would view it. Instead, work is a major part of human life. In everyday work, we are actually serving Christ himself. Doug Sherman and William Hendricks illustrate this fact well for us in their book, *Your Work Matters To God*.⁹² They suggest that work has both *intrinsic*⁹³ and *instrumental* value. They establish that work is a means to several ends:⁹⁴

- Through work we serve people.
- Through work we meet our own needs.
- Through work we meet our family's needs
- Through work we earn money to give to others
- Through work we love God

If we are to accept the above about work, then we must agree with Nürnberger that employment is the key to development. It does not only help deal with poverty but it also develops the whole human person. This is how we understand salvation. The churches examined in our case studies in chapter five makes this fact particularly clear. If that is the case, then we must ask, How can the church in South Africa address the unemployment crisis?

⁹¹ See his paper, *The Self-Employment Challenge: The Role Of The Church In Mobilising Resources*, in *Church And Development*, Op.cit. pp. 153 ff.

⁹² DOUG SHERMAN & WILLIAM HENDRICKS, *Your Work Matters To God*, New York: New York Press, 1996, pp. 87 ff.

⁹³ In describing the *intrinsic* value of work they establish (biblically) that (1) God is a worker, (2) God created people as workers, and (3) God created people to be his co-workers. Ibid.

⁹⁴ For a more detailed explanation of these points see Sherman and Hendricks, Ibid. pp. 87 ff.

We suggest the following ways:

1. The church must challenge unfair and unjust economic policies
2. It must network with the state and other organisations to address the problem.
3. It must create jobs. For example, it could help its members to set up small businesses
4. It should encourage the concept of self-employment rather than the 'wait for job' mentality.
5. It should use its professional and skilled people to train and prepare the unskilled for employment. Provide computer literacy, CVs, interview techniques, etc.
6. It could serve as a bridge builder between organisations. For example, between a local union and a local self-help manufacturing group who wants to tender at a lower price, will have to be debated.
7. It could serve as a medium between forums and the very grass-root levels because of the contact it already has through its local congregations.

To sum it up, the church can play a very vital role in the development of the new South Africa by making a valuable contribution to the unemployment problem. The serious question is: "Are we willing to go in that direction?" With 40% of the population of economically active people in this country being unemployed, one is going to have to develop quite a major programme to rebuild this economy and to create sustainable jobs. The church has a role to play in this regard because work matters to God.

7.3.10 Gender, Youth and Development

Reconstruction and Development in South Africa has not only to do with material and economic deprivation. It has to do with social and cultural values as well. As a result, we are obliged to integrate gender-awareness into our development work.⁹⁵ For a long time, women have suffered in our country, especially black women. They have been the victims of social, political, economic and even cultural abuse.⁹⁶ Women have not been given the opportunity, in the past, to rise in the

⁹⁵ See BEVERLY HADDAD, *Theologising Development: A Gendered Analysis of Poverty, Survival and Faith*, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Op. cit., pp.5-19.

⁹⁶ For concrete examples see LOUISE KRETZSCHMAR, *Gender, Women and Ethics*, in *Questions on Life and*

business world. Black women, in particular, were designed to be domestic workers or unskilled labourers. Fortunately, the new government is very gender sensitive and has implemented policies to address the inequalities in this regard. President Thabo Mbeki has consciously appointed very able women to serve in his cabinet. However, still much must be done in this area, especially in changing peoples' attitudes.

The church can play a vital role in this respect even though its credibility on this issue is in question. There are many churches that have, in the past and some in the present, isolated women from the leadership of the church. Although women are by far the faithful adherents to the church, they are not accorded the proper rights and opportunities of involvement in the church.⁹⁷ The church in South Africa can make a significant impact in our land by paving the road for women to assume and provide new leadership within its structures and beyond. It is gratifying to know that the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, of which I am a minister, has appointed its first women Moderator in a hundred years. All these are signs of change when we start to embrace the previously unthinkable.

Some churches need to re-visit their theological views on the position of women in the church. The Hebrew culture is not the only norm by which we treat or view women. The essential part of human development is that we treat people as human beings created in the image of God. All of us are equal before God: "Neither Greek or Jew, male or female..."

Although most churches in their national structures attempt to take seriously gender representation these days, many local congregations fail to do the same. There are local churches with male dominated leadership that refuse to accommodate women. It is necessary for church authorities to monitor this, and at the same time, provide proper biblical teaching and education on this subject. As local communities within the church embrace change in this respect, it will trickle down to the country at large since the church is said to have the majority of adherents in this land.

Morality, Op. cit., pp. 169-189.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.180.

The other disadvantaged groups in South Africa are children and youth. Apartheid has left the majority of them in destitution and neglect. G.C. Oosthuizen observes that there are only a few church-orientated associations active in programmes concerning the upliftment of people in our society through education, training and employment.⁹⁸ In relation to the youth, there is a great need for youth development programmes which need physical facilities, vocational guidance, learning materials, skills training, special employment programmes, in order to reintegrate the marginalised youth. The young people face severe unemployment and the lack of completing their education and training studies.

Although the government is already making significant in-roads in their attempts to address the issues facing our youth, this does not mean that the church should not get involved. The church should make closer contact with existing institutions and schools to assist the previously disadvantaged children and youth.

Oosthuizen further postulates, that illiterate persons should be assisted to obtain the ability to read and write. This could be done with the assistance of computers as supportive media.⁹⁹ The church could play a vital role in this area.

For this vision to materialise, it is important to utilise the talents of people who identify the needs of their own communities and through whom we could assist in serving those needs. Thus, if Jesus Christ is the answer to our situation, then the Christians and the church should take the lead in producing effectively this answer. We have seen in chapter Five how the Moses Maren Mission was able to successfully contribute to the education and development of rural disadvantaged children. This is an incredible indication that the church can make a significant difference in helping our young ones and thereby transforming society.

Oosthuizen stresses that mass involvement is necessary, those who pull up their sleeves in order to provide the necessary stimulus for real upliftment of the spirit, mind and body of everyone in

⁹⁸ G.C. OOSTHUIZEN, *Perspectives in Theology and Mission from SA- Signs of the Times*, D. M BALIA (ed.), The Edwin Mellem Press, 1993, pp.138-139.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

need.¹⁰⁰ Hence, self-motivated congregations should become more dynamic in their areas; they must identify their own resources and abilities; plans of actions and goal setting have to be drafted. Therefore, the church must have a holistic disposition in order to fulfil this need, by getting involved in the South African context more tangibly and more effectively.

It can be seen from the above that the church can make a significant contribution to development in South Africa. However, in order to do so it must be guided by its theology rather than by ideologies. We pointed out in chapter Six that development must be contextual as it attempts to respond to human needs in *particular* contexts. If this is the case then local churches have the *potential* to be the best agents of development.¹⁰¹ Hence it is vital that local churches join together in true ecumenical spirit to address the needs within their specific communities.¹⁰² It is only when they do this and when they join with other organisations that help to create a better quality of life for all people will their attempts at development succeed.

7.4 CONCLUSION

The church can only fulfil its prophetic mission and mandate by putting its Lord and Saviour first. The church is too crowded with other lesser significant things instead of being the loving presence of Christ in the world. The key to understanding the church is not based on how big, powerful and rich it is but on how it *is* the visible presence of Christ in a hurting and trouble world. The challenge to the church in South Africa is to become the church of Christ - we can only do that by following his example. The churches examined in the case studies point us to

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ I say *potential* because hierarchical structures, clericalism, dogmatics, ideological inclinations, claims on Christian exclusivity, and other similar issues in local churches all often work against good development practices. Beverly Haddad, for example, in a recent study shows just this in relation to gendered power relations. See BEVERLY HADDAD, *Theologising Development*, In *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Op. cit. It is my view, however, that as local churches attempt to become the *new society* they will be able to establish good development practices.

¹⁰² G. Schmidt states that churches need to have interdependence, responsibility and partnership as they seek to work towards development. He says this in the context of describing the relationship between churches from the North and South. We suggest the same in the context of local churches within the same community. See J. SCHMIDT, *Interdependence, Responsibility and Partnership: A German Perspective on the Northern Local Church in Her International Context*, Doctoral Thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1997.

some of the things that all churches in South Africa must embrace.

The church must be involved in the transformation of human lives and society. Development is part and parcel to the mission of the Christian church. The church in South Africa needs to recognise that involvement in development is no longer a choice. Why? Because, as we have shown in this research, the church's holistic understanding of its mission in the world compels it to do so. The biblical concern for the poor, needy and oppressed in the world requires that the church become involved in development work. The church also has a very firm theological mandate to participate in development ministries.

Finally the church must do so because it is found in the setting of a world of human suffering, pain and oppression and Christians, too, even though their citizenship is in heaven, cannot deny their experience in this world. All their experiences then in this life are also a concern for the church. The church cannot go on with blinkers ignoring the concerns of its people for justice, peace and a better life. The church must, as an agent of hope, participate in the establishment of a new transformed society - *Shalom*. More than this it must attempt to *be* that *New Society*. This is the challenge that confronts the church in the new South Africa.

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Batista, Israel	-	World Council of Churches
Benjamin, Keith	-	Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches
Brendan, Stan	-	Pastor: Catholic Church
Chigwida, Max	-	World Vision, Zimbabwe
Christians, Alroy	-	Youth for Christ
Dale, Kingsley	-	Pastor: Uniting Presbyterian Church
De Santa Ana, Julio	-	World Council of Churches
De Gruchy, J.W.	-	University of Cape Town
Govender, Shun	-	Development Officer, Anglican Church
Guma, Mongezi	-	South African Council of Churches
Hammond, Doug	-	Pastor: Salvation Army
Kobia, Sam	-	World Council of Churches
Koegelenberg, Renier	-	EFSA
Kritzinger, Klippies	-	UNISA
Malek, George	-	Ecumenical Pastoral Institute
Majiza, Charity	-	South African Council of Churches
Pienaar, Schalk	-	Community Pastor: Methodist Church
Smith, Brian	-	Pastor: Methodist Church.
van Schalkwyk, Annalet	-	UNISA

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Please help our research on your area by answering the following questions:

PART 1

HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW

(Select Housewife to interview on Household Interview).

(Indicate whether Household is Main or Additional)

1. As you see it, what Are the most pressing problems facing the Community?
2. How long has your family lived in this community? What was your reason for moving?

Where did you live before that?

Are you happier or unhappier here than where you lived previously?

3. How many times have you had to move in the last 5 years?

4. Is this house rented or owned? Rented
Owned

What is the rental/payment per month? R per month

5. How many separate households, i.e. groups of people who share cooking facilities, reside on the property?

• • • • •

• • • • •

6. We need to be able to describe the Community in detail, and for this we need some information on people who are in this household.

7. What number of rooms in your household is used for sleeping?

8. Are you and your family satisfied with this accommodation and ground or not? Share

9. What do you feel should be done to solve the housing problems in the community?

10. Is there anyone in your household who has had to take a job he/she did not like?

(Number - see household composition)

What type of job would he/she have wanted

11. (Refer to all unemployed in household composition) How long has this person (No. ...) been unemployed? What are the reasons.

.....
.....
.....

12. Did any of the young people in your household leave school earlier than they could or should have?

(List numbers in household composition)

Why generally did she/he leave school?

.....
.....
.....

13. (If applicable) Of your children still at school - what kinds of problems do they have (any problems)? Work, teachers, travelling, crowding?

.....
.....
.....

14. (If applicable) What problems do you have with the behaviour of any of your school-going or older teenage children? (Record details for all mentioned)

.....
.....

15. (If applicable) About children's play activities - what do you feel is needed in the area in the way of facilities?

16. a) Nowadays one hears of youthful gangs and trouble that they cause - how serious do you think this problem is? (Probe for area of gang and names of gangs).

.....
.....

- b) What do you feel could be done about it?

17. On average how much does this household spend on food per month?
18. How much goes on H.P. and loan repayments per month?
19. We would like some idea of problems in this area - we are not interested in any names or details that can identify people. If you take the properties around this one - across the road, on either side and including this property, is there anyone who seems to need help as regards:
Yes No
Heavy drinking?
Drugs?
Fighting in the home?
Child - beating?
Delinquency?
Any other problems?
(Specify problem if given:
20. In your house, who makes decisions as regards how much to spend on various things?
(Probe "most say")
Whether you should work or not?
What children are allowed to do?
When to buy larger items like furniture, clothing, cars?
What to do, or going out in evenings.
What to do over week ends.
21. Thinking about the marriages you know - acquaintances of groups - what are the problems which husbands tend to cause in a marriage or house?
22. How often do you have a friendly chat with any of your neighbours?
23. What kinds of careers and jobs should one encourage children to study for and aim at in life?
.....
.....
24. Who in the community do you see as the real leaders?
.....
.....

PART 2

Use this section with Adults in the Community. Introduce interview again.

25. How often do you attend religious services?

1. twice a week?
2. once a week?
3. + once a month?
4. + once every 3 to 6 months?
5. + once a year/special occasions?
6. never/hardly ever?

26. Do you take part in any other religious activities or groups connected with the church?
What?

.....
.....

27. What do you think religion means to people personally - what satisfactions does it give people?

28. Thinking about religion and attending religious meetings, which of the following is very important to you, quite important or less important to you:-

- | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|
| a. | Feeling close to God? | VI | I | LI |
| b. | Something interesting to do? | VI | I | LI |
| c. | Feeling one has done one's duty? | VI | I | LI |
| d. | Feeling comforted and secure? | VI | I | LI |
| e. | Helping to think deeply about oneself? | VI | I | LI |
| f. | Feeling moved and inspired by the Spirit of the Lord? | VI | I | LI |
| g. | A place to be with good friends and people? | VI | I | LI |
| h. | Working for social reform and justice in our country? | VI | I | LI |
| i. | Feeling confident and stronger? | VI | I | LI |
| j. | Finding Jesus and being saved? | VI | I | LI |

29. Who is Jesus to you and what does He mean for your life?

.....

30. Nowadays people seem to criticise Churches (religious organizations) quite a lot! Thinking of your own congregation, which of the following is true?

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | A little out of date and old-fashioned | Yes | No |
| 2. | Too concerned about raising funds | Yes | No |
| 3. | Does not take enough interest in the social problems in the community | Yes | No |
| 4. | Does not give a feeling of togetherness with fellow worshippers | Yes | No |
| 5. | Does not help one to feel saved and feel the Spirit of Jesus | Yes | No |
| 6. | Ministers/Church leaders are not sincerely concerned about people | Yes | No |
| 7. | Does not help one enough with personal problems and difficulties | Yes | No |
| 8. | A little dull and uninteresting | Yes | No |
| 9. | Irrelevant in addressing my needs and that of the community | Yes | No |

31. Think of people who are experiencing problems in the home, e.g., husband and wife problems, juvenile delinquency. Do you think a person or group from a religious body (church) could really help or is it best left to professional people?
32. Do you think the Church is actively addressing the problems in your community? Offer illustrations.

Is it the Churches responsibility to help develop the community?
33. When you think or talk about politics, what sort of thing is most often on your mind? (Probe for specific issues)
34. How do you see your future in the new South Africa?

Interviewer note the following about Household in which respondent lives:

Television Set	Yes		No
Furniture	New	Good condition	Old
Condition of house inside	Good	Average	Poor
Cleanliness of house inside	Clean	Average	Dirty
Garden	Well-kept	Neat	Uncared for

Types of cars around

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Other Comments:

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University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 3A

1. ST ANTHONY'S CHURCH

1.1 The Church Introduced

The community of Reiger Park in which St Anthony's is situated was originally an African township. However, because of the Group areas act in 1964, Blacks were forced to relocate to Vosloorus. On the 1st July 1965 Father Stan was sent to start a church to care for those working in the mines. Today the church has a membership of 1700 families.

1.2 Interview with the Pastor

What are some of the most essential needs of the community?

The most important need I saw as I visited the people was education. Teachers at that time had only come to matric. In 1966, I started the library, with 11 students, the next year 43 and then it grew. As a result, I had to go overseas to raise money. The school for a long period had over 5000 students. And over the years about 20 000 got through matric here.

What are the other projects you have?

We had secretarial courses where we train young girls and boys for the industries and banks as secretaries and typists. In 1972 we also saw a need for technical training. This resulted in the establishment of our Technical School where we provide training in basic engineering, fitting and turning, etc. We also give classes to try and break the prejudices on the factory floor between management and workers. We also then started a satellite of technical training- during the day and night- technical drawing, maths, etc. But as the government opened these things we closed some of them because there was no need for us to run these. Then we went to the skills training.

Presently we have the following:

St Anthony's Adult Education Centre which assists disadvantaged students to improve every aspect of their lives by offering them spiritual guidance, educational opportunities and recreational facilities. Its primary mission is to provide adult students with education and training as key factors in personal growth and development, leading towards employment opportunities for further study. The mission - with no regard for race or creed - lays much emphasis on human rights, human dignity and mutual respect. Learning the human relations skills needed to work effectively and productively with people of all races and cultures is considered a vital aspect of this education process in preparing students to take their rightful place

in the new South Africa. The Centre, then as now, is concerned particularly with aspiring students who were deprived of access to education because of political, economic or social conditions in their early years.

The programme over the years was extended to include teacher upgrading- both primary and high school with practical classes for students studying science subjects at UNISA.

We also run evening classes that covers the needs of students from literacy to matriculation. The literacy section, through its use of the most up-to-date training methods, lays a firm foundation for the education of our students. All are encouraged to gradually move-up the educational ladder until they have reached matriculation level. Promotion is based on regulations laid down by the adult section of the Gauteng Education Department. We have very good library facilities.

After extensive research it was felt that a Finishing School should be introduced to help students "finish" matric. This is registered under the Adult Education Programme. Our present objectives are two-fold:

- to assist those whose pass rate was too low for admission to tertiary institutions and courses of their choice;
- to assist those students who passed three subjects and still require a further three subjects for a matriculation pass.

This is a full-time study programme, where students are restricted to three subjects and training in life skills. The new results combined with their standard ten record, should help them to gain them admission to the tertiary institute of their choice. I must say that our results have been excellent.

We also started the Franciscan Matric Project in 1986 in response to requests from concerned parents on the East Rand. Approximately 700 students register each year to follow a full-time matric course. Each year results are consistently well above the national average with our pass rate in excess of 80%.

And then, the great need for skills training in our country inspired the establishment of the Skills Training Centre. At present the majority of trainees come from the disadvantaged background. By training them in a variety of skills they are gaining self-esteem and the means to obtain employment. Trainees can choose from the following courses: sewing, knitting, secretarial, computers, plumbing, electrical installation, bricklaying, and carpentry, plastering and welding. Qualified instructors guide our trainees through a modular system of training to gain basic skills. The courses last for eight weeks, during this time they also have instruction in numeracy and literacy through the Pathfinder computer system. They are also given instruction in life skills and entrepreneurial skills.

Thousands of people have been able to get jobs after going through the skills training. We have past students in government today. Thousands have gone through matric

here. Thousands have gone from literacy to matric and right up to university. Little Africans, from shepherd boys down in the Transkei came to work in the mines, got through matric here and have become teachers...

I saw the old people and the way some were being treated by their families. So I started a day Care Centre to cater for their social, physical and emotional needs. There are doctors and dentist looking after them. My ladies look after them. The nurses come in from the Social Welfare Department. We have a Medical Centre here. The old folk occupy themselves with games, exercise and various forms of handiwork, which is sold to raise funds...

Then after that, I identified the need to deal with drug and alcohol abuse and then opened up the House of Mercy. This Treatment Centre offers new life and new hope of recovery from drug and alcohol dependency, especially to those who are deprived. Treatment is based on the philosophy that alcohol and drug addiction are illnesses which can be arrested. A professional service is offered with emphasis on healing the whole person. In a spirit of mercy and compassion, the patients are helped to regain their confidence and self-esteem, to find themselves spiritually, and once again to become fully-functioning persons. The programme is short-term(3-6 weeks) and includes individual counselling, group therapy, occupational therapy, alcohol and drug education, stress management and family therapy. This is followed by an eight week after-care service. We also offer a 15 day out-patient treatment programme to those persons who are suited to such treatment. The House of Mercy has been treating addicted people for the past seven years and enjoys a good success rate.

Then I identified the need for an Aids Centre. I visited many AIDS patients and I saw them rejected by their families and friends. And so in 1992 we established St Francis House, a home where the terminally ill are able to die with dignity and be reconciled with God, with themselves and with their families. Services offered by the house include: 24 hour professional nursing care; daily visitation by a medical doctor; counselling and spiritual guidance; three daily meals; respite care for those whose families need a break from the constant heavy burden of caring for their loved ones and all laundry facilities. The House also has a prayer chapel for spiritual support, where regular services are conducted for patients and their families, where great comfort and consolation is found. These are all the things we do through St Anthony's Church.

How did you identify the needs within the community?

The process I used is identification. I didn't start anything without first seeing the need for it. I visited the people in their homes and there I discovered their needs as I spoke to them and observed their living conditions.

Funding I did myself. I went overseas to Germany, America and many countries in Europe. Especially, I went to the headquarters of the subsidiaries working in South Africa, e.g. Otis and Three M. I got them to help me to put up these buildings you see here. The church was behind me but not money wise because they had to keep their own missions going.

Would you say that your church is involved with development work?

Of course! Everything we do is about development, especially community development and people development. Look at all the people who are now in top places because of our education programme.

How does the community see the Church?

It would be better if you could ask them. They [community] are very proud of the place. I must say that the Coloured people, if you look outside now 95% are black, never had an incident. We never had to close for one day since I opened in 1965. We never had trouble nothing with the students. The work of this church is appreciated.

How would you say the Church has transformed this society?

Well it has given them dignity and something to live for. Without education you have nothing. The Church gave them something to be proud of themselves and to take their place within the country when the new dispensation came about in 1994. We try to develop the whole man here: spiritually, mentally, intellectually, physically, culturally and recreationally. We have a lot of recreation facilities here. We have squash, tennis, swimming, cycling, soccer, ballet, boxing and a fully equipped gymnasium. We have all these facilities here.

What is your understanding of the Christian Mission?

To develop the whole man (sic) is the Christian mission. Everything is contained in that. All these things are contained in salvation. And if you see a frustrated man you have to try and develop him, help him in his education to build him so that he can appreciate what life can give him that helps him spiritually and provides upliftment. Salvation is not just a simple spiritual thing.

What do you understand by development?

To me development is first of all to develop the whole man (sic) and to give him something to be proud of himself, dignity in himself, respect for himself, and be able to give back to the community something that he was deprived of, but now he can help others to achieve something good in the country. The church must play a part in all of this.

What do you understand by a theology of development?

I'm in this for God and the people, not for the money. I don't get a salary. If God is not in your life then what are you doing it for then except for money. If God is not part of the whole development then the only reason for anyone doing this is for money. For his own importance and his own power. Development work is centrally fixed in one's relationship with God and with your neighbour. Through your work, kindness and compassion you show your love for your neighbour. As you give them

they see that you are not doing it for your own glorification. You are doing it for a higher motive-for God.

What are some of the theological issues related to development?

See, when you come to theology really then you run into the spiritual side of things. You see, in order to be a balanced person you must be a spiritual person. You have to either believe in God or you don't. Otherwise its just something you're doing for certain reasons. I don't know for what reasons if you do not believe in God and in the purpose of man. The concept of man is important. The relationship between man and God is an important one and also between man and man. We are all connected in the sense that we are all God's children- everyone of us. We are on our way to God no matter what church we may belong to. Education has brought many people to God and has helped them to be developed spiritually. Hundreds of people have come into the Church here. The kingdom of God is heaven at the end with God beholding the concepts of beauty, goodness and love. The kingdom is about God's love.

Why and how should the Church be involved in development?

It is part of our mission as simple as that. We are not here just to develop one- give a man a Bible and say go and study that and that's it. We must keep our eyes out for peace and justice like we were very involved with in the apartheid years. Now we must keep up the peace and justice. We must see that justice is done with the new government. We must speak out if things are not done properly, we must not be afraid. Human beings are as such. If the government is wasting money and not taking care of the poor, the Church must speak out. We see more poor today. Sit here in this office and see for yourself....

Everyone does not have the same talents. We are people of differences. Wherever you think you can help to uplift the poor it is up to the Church to see how you can do it. Whether it is to look after the poor, the aged, social welfare, or whether it is to help the poor with food or things like that, whatever. Each one must try and do it well.

Is it necessary to have a partnership with others in attempting to help the poor?

Well the church and government must work together to a certain degree. Finances becomes an issue. How I'm I to pay teachers? How do I keep this place going? I'm training the poorest of the poor and I have to get money. Private sector, the government and the church must work together to help the poor. I couldn't work without partnerships.

APPENDIX 3B

2 THE SALVATION ARMY

2.1 The Church Introduced

The Salvation Army is situated on the corner of Howard and Turvey Roads in Benoni. Its property includes a Church, creche and a Goodwill Centre. In 1970 Major Barry Swarts started the work at Ampthill Avenue. Eight years later the church relocated to its present venue in Turvey Avenue. It was here that the Church started to focus on the needs of the poor, the homeless, the pensioners and the children of domestic workers.

Presently, the church has about 100 members, with about thirty active soldiers, and are led by Captain Doug Hammond. The Church meets its own expenses but the Goodwill Centre is driven by the community. As Captain Hammond puts it: "We get a lot of resources from every section of the community including business, individuals, other churches are a wonderful support to us, the Glynnwood Hospital, schools, social service clubs, the newspaper is a support to us, so although the Church oversees the work, all of the resources come from the community."

2.2 Interview with the Pastor: Captain Doug Hammond

Captain Hammond shared about his calling to be involved in development:

In the Salvation Army we have a history of working with the poor, and I was brought up in the Salvation Army, and although I didn't gravitate to it as a teenager or as a young adult, I think planted in my heart as a child was the needs of the poor, and later in my life when I became sensitive to the needs of the poor, particularly in 1979 at Atlanta I started a career, but as I started a career, I recognised that God had a special plan for me, was calling me to a different kind of life. The Salvation Army was what I was most familiar with, but also I tried to take an objective look at it, and realised that there was no better way for me to honour God by serving the poor than through the Salvation Army. Again the holistic view of our ministry was a thing that really grabbed me- we don't recognise poverty as simply an economic problem but also has a spiritual aspect. In many of the secular organisations that deal with the needs of the poor, it is far too simplistic as they deal with the superficial issues as opposed to the actual issues of poverty.

I put the following question to Captain Hammond: "*Do you think that it requires a very definite calling to work with the poor?*" He responded: "I have the highest respect for many other partners in ministry, and I would never even remotely suggest that those are an inferior calling. I can only speak about my own experience, and I have had job offers to go into ministry into other areas, youth ministry or other

churches, and I have thought: that looks nice, and I've tried to deny my own calling. But ultimately I never can. I do feel very confident in my ministry, I do believe that God has specifically called me to work with the poor. I'm not speaking economically strictly, but the poor, the lonely and the rejected, the kind of people the Salvation Army has specialised in."

What are the needs within your church community?

When I speak about our church community, they're my flock in many ways (the people from the Goodwill Centre). They have to be reminded that they are people of value. One of the issues of poverty is they lack value, so they start making ridiculous decisions for themselves. There is a sense of almost apathy of defeatism. So we instill within our people that they are people of value because God has created them and God loves them. We feel a special need is on a weekly basis a simple plan of salvation needs to be presented, so that people who come to stay here get an understanding. Bad teaching is a big problem. A lot of them have had an affiliation with Churches, and they have an understanding of what it is to be saved or to be a Christian and so many times it is so far out, so we have a very strong commitment to good teaching on basic salvation.

What are the needs you have identified within the community in which your Church is found?

Within the area, many needs are physical, there are people that struggle, they don't have accommodation, they don't have an income that can give them enough to feed their family through the month. We address both of those. Also there is a section of the community as well that I refer to as the working poor, those people who have low-paying jobs, who can eke out an existence for their family through the month, but if they have unexpected expenses, a health problem, or the interest rates go up, something of that nature, then they need support through the month with food parcels, and we help those people who are struggling a bit. I'll tell you one of the big things that we've identified is the whole issue of developing families. Literally every single person that we deal with here, I can't think of a situation in three years where there is not some connection to the dysfunctional family, where there has been physical or sexual or emotional abuse, but at the very least neglect. One of the things we really try to emphasise within this fellowship is the issue of the family, and how we can be a family for each other, but also raising the awareness of what it is to be a father and a mother.

What are some of the practical things you are doing to address the needs within the community?

We have a creche, where we advertise it as high quality child care for low income families, that's for domestic workers who don't make much money, but need to care for their children. We have 15 children from the community, and we have hired a principal for our nursery school. We also have girls that are staying in the Goodwill Centre who are looking for work. We train them so that they can get some qualifications in child care, and once they leave here we'll include their work

experience and their qualifications, so hopefully that will help them look for a job. We also leave five places open in the creche so that if you're staying at the Goodwill Centre, but need to go and look for a job, we will take care of your children.

We have residents who stay here, and they are expected to contribute to the community—those who have jobs but low income. They are expected to pay R100 a week for room and board. For those who don't have work, then they work for us for a period, I think it is 10 days, and then they go on a cycle where they are working for a week on, and next week they look for jobs in the community. Everything we do is to encourage people towards independence and developing a sense of self-esteem, so no one stays for free, everybody contributes in one way or another. We also have the pensioner block, which is specifically designed to take care of those who are on a limited pension. They get R540 per month and we take R320 of that, and that covers their expenses, room and board for a full month, and then they have a little money for their expenses, sugar and tea, and smokes.

We also hand out food parcels to the working poor, this is not a regular thing. We also run our Monday to Friday soup and bread lunch in the park. That's designed for workers who are looking for casual work, but haven't found it, so that they can have something to eat before they have to walk home.

What is your understanding of the Christian mission?

Can I speak specifically about the Salvation Army mission, how I understand it? Our mission is, first of all, proclamation of the gospel and calling people to repentance. The second part of our mission is the proclamation and living out a life of holiness. That really is what our whole outreach to the poor is. Our aim and our goal in meeting the needs of the poor is in obedience to God. We certainly don't do this for our own glory. We do this to bring glory to God, to be pointing back to God. Some people suggest that our mission is one spiritual and one social, but that is a lie. I don't think that those are separate. Our social ministry is spiritual. Matthew 5:16 says, "Let them see your good works and praise your Father in heaven". And that should be our goal, that as they see our good works for the poor that the praise would go to God, not to the Salvation Army, and certainly not to me.

So there is a deep and very valid connection between the spiritual and the social?

Yes. I think the Salvation Army can be criticised in our history for separating those two, and not acknowledging that our social ministry is in fact extremely spiritual, it's in fact a working out a life of holiness. There's some misunderstanding of that, but I think that's when people catch a vision for what we're doing. It's not just welfare work, it's actually a working out of our Christian calling.

Would you consider that your church is involved with development?

Oh yes, I think everything we do is development orientated. Everything we do is to encourage people toward upliftment, towards empowerment, we believe very much that poverty is not simply an economic situation but there is a spiritual element to it

as well, and we try to build dignity into people so that again even though economically they're not doing so well right now at least they have a sense of control and discipline about themselves. Literally everything we do, no one stays here for free, so our work is designed not to enslave them but in fact to empower them. All of the programmes we do have behind them a motive to be uplifting, encouraging people.

We are certainly involved in people development. In many ways we are also involved in community development, many different segments of the community come here. You find businessmen meeting pastors here and social service groups meeting individuals, so you see many partnerships are formed here. ... I think we are involved in community development, and developing partnerships. I think that a big part of my responsibility is to identify those people in the community we can work with.

What is your understanding of the concept of development?

Development has to do with betterment. It goes hand in hand with helping a community to reach its potential. It's helping an individual reach his or her potential. I think that there are many people who are poor because their potential has been beaten down and discouraged.

What do you understand by a theology of development?

In Jer.29:11 God says, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you". We believe that God has a plan for every single person and that plan would be that man (sic) would come to know God intimately, and know God's will for his life and that in that relationship they would find true fulfillment, a true sense of purpose in their lives and would recognise that potential. The whole issue of personal development I believe is in man knowing God, knowing our Creator, and knowing what He has designed for you. Again our whole purpose of having a spiritual element for our residents is not just tacked on in the end, it is actually central to why they're here, that they would understand that. Certainly I can help and encourage them, and I would love to do that, but it is actually in their getting to know God that they're going to find their true potential and what God has called them to. ... We can do a lot for people, we can house and feed them, but if we can't do something about their relationship with God, you know, I'm not sure if we've made any lasting impression, certainly not for eternity.

... Jesus had a soft spot for the poor, and he had compassion on them. When people come here, and they are down, and they are rejected, that's a big thing about poverty is the rejection. They are told by their family, or by their wife, or by their children or told by their work that they are not needed any more. That's a huge issue. Rejection is a thing that many of them deal with. They realise that those were the people Jesus was looking for. He was a friend of those people. ... I think that's a special thing Jesus offers to the poor. We don't promise their problems will be taken away but we do promise acceptance, and I think that's what a lot of people are desiring.

How do you respond to some churches who don't seem to indicate the importance of Christ in development work?

I think it's weak. In helping the poor, there may be many things that motivate us. Sometimes we're motivated by our own guilt and we feel bad that someone is in a tough situation so we go out to help them, not to the glory of God, and not even to that persons benefit, but we do it because we want to feel better about ourselves, and we see that a lot. Quite often their efforts are misguided, they'll go and give a blanket to a guy in the street, and they'll go home and feel good about themselves. The fact of the matter is the guy sold the blanket before he even got home. He's bought a bottle, and the next day he's worse off than he was before he had the blanket. Quite often, even in the history of the Church, we have been motivated by our own guilt or motivated by wanting to feel better about ourselves, not really motivated to give glory to God. When you are truly motivated to glorify God, in helping the poor, then you can seek His guidance and he will bless you. He can even bless your mistakes. I think that is one of the things that I have found in terms of the holistic aspect of this ministry is that sometimes I just do things so wrong, and yet somehow God turns it around to bless it. I think that a lot of things are involved in poverty. Not allowing God to really take control and to take credit for what you're doing is really missing the point.

What would you say are some of the important issues that one needs to look at when you consider a theology of development?

The issue of dignity, men created in the image of God. It's easy for us to look at people through the eyes of our culture, and look down on people. Jesus looked at Peter and he said, "you are Simon but you will be...". He saw something in Simon that nobody else could see, not even Peter himself. We have to develop a healthy theology of development. We have to look at things through God's eyes and to see the things that He sees as important...

I can say from our people here that eternal security is a big thing. A lot of them are dealing with such desperate situations, and so many layers of hardship. We talk a lot about heaven, no more tears, no more hardship, no more crying and no more pain. We've got people who are victims of violence, so receive a sense of release for many of them, to think that hey, my circumstances are awful here, but hey, for the joy set before me...

Hope is a big thing. Hope is a constant theme that we preach on. Salvation is every Sunday night, but I try to tie hope into any message that I'm doing...

How does the community view the Church?

We've got a little bit of a problem with that. A lot of people just see us as a welfare organisation. That's another reason for the big sign outside which says "Jesus is Lord", we want to identify with the power of God, with Jesus. But in terms of our acceptance in our community, God has brought us favour here. We've had troublemakers that have stayed here, and we've had some difficult times and yet the community has been so incredibly supportive. I don't know of another place like this in the world where a community has supported so faithfully an institution like this. I

told you this is a completely community based project. We don't receive money from the government, or from the Salvation Army's national appeal or from overseas. All of our resources come from the East Rand.

Would you say that your Church has brought about transformation in the lives of individuals and in the community in which it is found?

Yes, certainly in the lives of individuals. I wouldn't like to say that everyone who comes and stays here has been transformed. I can take you even to people who are outside who have shown a sense of transformation in their lives. We have a single mother here who has three children. She's always in trouble with her temper, and with her language. She never learned to read, she learned to read while she was here so that she could read her Bible. She recognised her need for God, and recognised that in order to grow, she needed to learn to read, so at the age of 35 she learned to read for the first time, and now is an encouragement to us..."

Is it necessary to have a partnership with others in attempting to help the poor?

Yes. I mentioned to you that I was involved with the home for victims of domestic violence in Cape Town. People often came to look at what we were doing, they would almost every time say, "this is a really good project you're doing. We should be doing something like this at our church." And I say, "why, I'm battling here, why would you want to go and do what I'm doing?" Certainly the people who come here, again I thank God for this community, almost every time I show someone around, they say this is a really good project you're doing, what can we do to help? No sense of competition, or they're not feeling guilty that they not doing something, but they want to get involved. So I've picked up a tremendous sense of partnership in Benoni. Again, with all areas of the community and even with the churches that have come and participated here, and it's just a wonderful thing. I think we have assisted them in understanding the needs of the poor, and that's something we have done for them. And when we have been able to contribute, we do. We have been guilty sometimes to accept the role of the receiving church, that we are always receiving things, but we have made a specific effort through the newspaper, through speaking at other churches, and numerous ways, to be available when ecumenical events, youth events, we don't have a big lot of musicians or a drama group, or anything like that. Quite often we'll arrange to get the hot dogs made, or to clean up or something like that. So I would like to think that we're contributing to the community as well, that we're not simply taking.

I think that Benoni has been a blessing to me. We have a very special niche within the Body of Christ, and I hope we're being faithful in that. I know your church has the counseling programme, and we've been able to send our people there who have benefited from it, and have come back here, and I think that's just a small picture of some of the development things that we've seen.

I like the word partnership. I'd like to think that's what Jesus had in mind when He spoke about the Body. When we start comparing ourselves, it's very dangerous. We start feeling inadequate and defensive. The spirit that I've had in Benoni is one that many of the churches are at peace with what God is calling them in their community

and they don't feel that we're a threat. ... I am a part of a Rotary Club, and that helps me because it gives me contacts, but it also gives me exposure to many things that are going on in the community. I could easily get lost here, and never know what is going on out there. I make sure that we can contribute, we're not here to only take, we want to offer something...

I don't feel that anyone has ever felt threatened that we're expecting from them. I think we can easily get into that mentality, but when we do that it's like relying on them instead of God. When we have excess food, we give to other charitable organisations, and the policy we have in terms of the people we help, is that we only give to people who can't give back. There are a lot of boarding houses and creches in the Salvation Army work in Daveyton. Foreseeably they couldn't give back to us. The pastor in Daveyton didn't have any cupboards, so the men in this centre got some money together, R450. We bought the timber, and we sent the guys out there and they actually built the cupboards... It was a blessing for us to be able to contribute something. The other thing about that, that I find interesting is that many of the people we deal with here at the centre are whites, and these people in the past have enjoyed sheltered employment as a result of apartheid, and many of these people are the ones that struggle with the new South Africa, and the issues of racism. It was great for me yesterday at the soup kitchen to see these guys serving the guys from the African community, and to see the bridges being built.

I spoke at the Chamber of Commerce and said to them that dealing with the poor is good business. For example, if we can take people who show a potential to take care of themselves and with encouragement support them, they can get back into their community and be contributing members, then that's going to uplift the community, there will be more people paying taxes, less people breaking the law, it's going to be a healthier community. In many ways the whole issue of partnerships will benefit the community. Business don't understand the issues of building a healthier community, and I don't understand the issues of making money, but we work well together.

Why and How should the Church in South Africa get involved with development?

Even just on the issue of reconciliation, that is a reason enough in South Africa. Particularly in South Africa, the issue is the poor. Everything else is a waste of time, like trying to develop the economy or trying to build schools. Also in South Africa it is almost as if it is an opportunity for the world, because the resources are here, that something can be done. You know if you go to places like, eg. Uganda where I worked, there is nothing there, you can't make something from nothing; here a strong functioning Church is in place, if we can catch a vision for dealing with the poor, maybe that is not the problem, maybe it's the mobilisation that is the problem, to be able to care for the poor, to uplift the poor, obviously not in the next couple of years, but in the next generation. If this country can show that this is possible it would be a testimony to the rest of the world. I don't think there's any other part of the community that has the potential to do development work like the local church. We've got a variety of skills, in the Church we have a variety of people. You've got pastors, teachers, care-givers, people like businessmen, administrators, all the people are in the Church an infrastructure set up.

How can wealthy churches embark on development?

One of the big things with development is family life, in the higher economic group, I consider as a most valuable solution, my wife and I try to model a healthy marriage and family relationship with our children. This is a key issue. Many of the poor do not have a healthy role model. The affluent community can understand the importance of sacrificial giving and that's something we try to use to the best of our ability as much income as I get I use toward ministry. Also just raising your awareness because there are opportunities for more affluent churches to be involved, and I can't speak specifically. One thing is to just treat people with dignity. I see the way that often when a man asks for money, I politely say, "I don't give money, sorry." Becoming more sensitive to the rejected, the rejected are not always those people that don't have money. Quite often the rejected are the old, and lonely..."

Do you think that the Churches in South Africa are involved in development?

From what I've seen, yes, for sure. I think one of the reasons why my wife and I are really glad to raise our children here is that we can really get involved with the poor. There is an epidemic of poverty in the USA and apparently the reason is because the centre of the cities are eroding, they're turning into battle-fields. The affluent Americans in the suburbs are isolated from it, and that's why when we see pictures of America we never see that side of things... In S.A. we don't have that sense of insulation from the poor, there is a higher awareness of the need to be involved in development with the churches in South Africa. The media has highlighted the needs of the poor so much as well so my impression is the churches are much more involved than the traditional western churches, but obviously I think the opportunities are massive, that's why my wife and I are here. We find it really exciting to be where the poor aren't somewhere else, you can get to know them and you can get involved.

APPENDIX 3C

3. THE NORTHFIELD METHODIST CHURCH

3.1 The Church Introduced

The Northfield Methodist Church was founded in 1929 as an offshoot of Benoni Central Church. It was initially started as a suburban church at 5th Avenue, Northmead. Today it is situated on larger premises in Aerodome Road in Northmead. It is a white congregation with a smattering of black people. About 1200 people worship on a Sunday, plus about 150 youth in Youth Church, and there are 2 Children's Churches. The church has 4 Pastors and a number of other full-time workers.

3.2 Interview with the Senior Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Schalk Pienaar

What are the needs within your church community?

Within the white community itself, employment is a problem. Any dysfunction is a major issue. When I moved from Natal some 5 years ago, one of the things that really struck me is the incredible stress levels of the white community, related to crime, driving to work and back. These days, the other issue, of course is young white people struggle to find jobs... Those are probably the major ones.

What are some of the practical things you are doing to address the needs within the community?

Well. We have a job-creating agency, for sort-of white collar workers, if you're talking about the white community particularly. We have a major family care centre in place. The community system of the cells which is aimed at providing a network of relationships, almost a safety-net, if you like, for people to fit into. Other pastoral strategies we're concerned with fellow-care ministries. We have a play-therapy department, with about 7 therapists, and our counselors, we have about 10 or 11 of them.

... Most of them are well-trained volunteer staff, and well supervised... so we've designed all sorts of pastoral strategies, I would say, to try and address this.

What is your understanding of the Christian Mission?

The traditional one of course, is evangelism and social concern, certainly in Methodist circles, but I think it is a bit more profound than that. For me it is about crossing barriers, in the name of Christ. Wherever there is a barrier of darkness, and

we bring light to the darkness in the name of Christ, then mission happens. Whether the barrier is illiteracy, poverty or just being spiritually dead in the dark- where the light comes is where the Kingdom comes.

... When I come in the name of Christ social concern and evangelism becomes interconnected. I think it's a false dichotomy, personally I don't think you can separate them like that. I think it's a old way of looking at mission and I think it's a very false one. Because it's about doing things, rather than being with people. Some evangelise and others begin with social concern, and for me, the issue is how can I live my life as a Christ-follower?

... the discussion [evangelism and social concern] will always go on, but what concerns me is that I think very few church groups and organisations will actually be able to close that gap. When one looks at Mother Teresa... I mean, there is our mission, which is not a valid dichotomy between social concerns or evangelism, simply saying, here I am in the name of Christ, to wipe your brow. That is for me a picture of mission, not to change you or to read you... but to serve you.

Would you consider that your Church is involved with development?

Yes, in many profound ways. If I can spell them out for you: We have 2 sets of literacy training. Saturday school for standard 8's through to 10's ... We have a stretch sewing class, we have various forms of sewing, training that goes on, which caters I would say for 60-80 women. We have 300-400 women who pitch up on Monday mornings for skills training. Our soup kitchen caters for about 60-70 people every day. These are things that happen on campus, on our Northfield property. These are major ministries which have been going on for 15 years.

Our satellite campus, at Khotse Community Centre in Etwatwa, we have just acquired this property and we have a number of staff there. There are 2 sections to it. The one is a job-creation section, where we've got various people who are doing little enterprises that we oversee with them. The task is to make them independent, and they then pay us the rent for the use of the facility. There are about 10-11 little enterprises on the go at the moment, such as brick making, candle making, a large bakery of about a quarter million Rands worth ... There is also a sewing project there, a training school, a computer school, and so on, and so on. Job creation is on the one leg.

....The other leg is an education leg. We run a pre-school there, about 70 children. Then a Saturday School, investigatively training with teachers themselves, to help teachers, using some of the education stuff, but there is also some ad hoc stuff. Then the third leg, that is, for example hospice now rents a room with us, in order to help with palliative care, particularly with AIDS and that sort of thing, so it's a bit of an outreach where one of my elders works. These are some of the things that take place on our large property out there.

What is your understanding of the concept of development?

Dignity! Well, dignity is more than wealth ... It's more than health, it's more than peace. A deeper concept, for me. One of the things that we really want to guard against is a patronising, top-down stuff. The way that we try to do that, is we've developed close links with the Methodist Church in Etwatwa, called St. Peter's. Their leaders and our leaders now, together form the management committee forum that runs the Centre.

... It's guided by a deep respect for the individual and the community, and very strongly by the narrative therapeutic approach to our Care Centre where the mission we take on in working with people as a co-pilgrim - we're on a journey together. We are pilgrims-with. They are the experts of their lives. We share our lives on their invitation. We're a bottom-up type mission here rather than top-down which says we've got something, you need to get it. We would like to rather see that they've got something that we need to get, and in the process there's something we can offer as well, as part of it. ... We don't take them anywhere, they take themselves. We just inform the process if they should want that. And then they go where they would like to go.

What do you understand by a theology of development?

Well, again the key word is dignity. Honour your neighbour. Caring for the lost, or caring for the poor. That is the perspective of kingdom development rather than secular development. I would see a great divide between the two goals, as it were. I think in secular thinking development means wealth ... For me, development is more along a kingdom line, which cannot separate justice from development.

How do you respond to some churches who don't seem to indicate the importance of Christ in development work?

They are wrong. We are very Christ-centred. It is just our interpretation of a Christ-centredness that this needs. We place a very high value on humans ... this works itself out in the way that we try and respect human beings and try and live out that respect.

... Personally I feel that Christ-centredness is often tinged with a deep arrogance, which says we've got it, you need to get it. I think that is deeply arrogant. You become the servants, you come with a spirit of agape. In mission work, the ones who grow the most are those who get involved with the poor ... That's a spin-off for us in Northfield as we get more and more involved with the poor. So to answer your question then, we come in the name of Christ and we are there because of Him.

What would you say are some of the important issues that one needs to look at when you consider a theology of development?

Theological issues, that's a major one. Some of the other theological issues is the State and Church. As a secular church we would be involved with a different kingdom. I'm very worried about our connection with the State. ... We become clones of government policy and so on. That perturbs me. I think that's a major issue.

Other issues? I think our theology of the poor is undeveloped, certainly my reading of it, my understanding. Our theology of mission I think needs to be revamped. Particularly in the light of the whole narrative thinking of pastoral theology. I think the crucial issue, is related to dignity, in my view, and the theology of wealth. We need a logical critique of financial philosophies, such as capitalism, ... capitalism is probably one of the most evil philosophies of structuring government and finance that we have ever seen. It is based on greed, and the cathedrals are the stock exchanges of the world ..."

How does the community view the Church?

The black community, how do they see the church? There's goodwill towards the church. You know, one finds that in the political transition that we have come through any organisation other than the church has always been treated with great suspicion. And the church being in the grass roots level, touching people day to day, is a sense of trust, a sense of goodwill, knowing that we're not around for gain. It's so easy for corruption to slip in. That's my gut feeling, you know, I would check that out, but that's my theory. ... We see large numbers of people turning to the church for help in education and job creation.

Would you say that your Church has brought about transformation in the lives of individuals and in the community in which it is found?

No. It's merely been the light in the darkness. Light itself has a power, it tends to dispel darkness, and brings hope. It shines up justice, and in a sense I think it's made a difference and a change ... However, I have seen lives of individuals being transformed. I think, you know, simple stories of the person who has been through literacy class for three years, and now can read and write. Our bakery where the people are now dividing the scones and the bread they make and go and sell it in the township, and there is income coming into various households, as a result of that. ... You're bringing a little money into your home, and you're doing it by the sweat of your own labour, there is a lot of dignity. There is a lot of dignity if you can read a signpost, or if you help to pass a matric exam. The domestic employment thing also gives us great joy when people find employment, and a place. ... Just Sunday a guy shared with me what getting a job, through our employment agency for the white collar worker, meant for him and how much this as changed his life. It has been very exciting to see lives being changed.

Why and how should the Church be involved in Development?

I think the "why" is easy: because that is why we exist, for the rest of the world. We exist for the rest of the world to step into our church, it's as simple as that. The "how" is again fraught with difficulty because it essentially comes from our actuality... I don't think it should be a guilt thing. I think it needs to be a "calling thing", and there is a big difference for me, and so ... in our church it is not to get people caring for the poor because, shame, the poor people, but a deep sense that God is calling on your life to care for the poor. The how is really related to call.

How can a wealthy church, such as yours, embark on development?

... raised consciousness ... split values lie at the basis of motivation. When the value is raised through structures... it's in the heart ... and so for example in May this year, we spent the whole month preaching on caring for the poor, every Sunday. We went through it in our cells. Our cells have in addition to all the formal things, the informal involvement in development has been phenomenal. The destitute women and children's thing, near Springs somewhere, 2 of our cells are involved. One of our cells have gone to Kid's Haven and they help the children on a Saturday morning, just to read. We got ourselves involved in the Epworth Children's Home. They just raised R25 000 for them. ... Others are involved in the Police Station. Others go to the prisons. ... I've given up trying to keep track of what they do.

Well we are in a circuit, and we're involved. In addition to this, we've been invited by St Peter's Church in Etwatwa to have closer links with them, which we have gladly taken up. We waited on them to invite us, we don't want to pile into that. ... It's important [to wait] because that's respect, and then there is also a fear of us whites as you say are affluent, I would say middle class. Given the history of the country, we know Whites have tended to run into Black situations to tell them what to do.

St Peter's is keen on learning how to do things. I think they want to know a bit more about how we're going to relate to managing the Khotse Community Centre. They want us to learn about how they do things, about how they worship God. Essentially they want us to be friends. Also there is the reality that they are a poor community. They don't push money around. ... I think what we see very clearly is that we need Etwatwa more than they need us. We need the poor more than the poor need us.

Do you think that the Churches in South Africa are sufficiently involved in development?

No, not at all. Because they have a poor understanding of the Kingdom, a poor theology.